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CENTRE FOR MIDDLE EASTERN  
AND ISLAMIC STUDIES

PALESTINIAN AMERICANS: SOCIO-POLITICAL ATTITUDES  
OF PALESTINIAN AMERICANS  
TOWARDS THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

by

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## INTRODUCTION

The study of the Palestinian communities has a special importance because of the conditions in which they have lived since the occupation of their homeland and the establishment of the Israeli state. This consequently, has led to an exodus of Palestinians from their homeland.

Palestinian society is the only one in the world whose emigrants form the major part of their society. These emigrants are not allowed to return to their homeland however the situation may change and whatever political 'flexibility' they show, for them, this 'flexibility' means, first of all, the abandonment of their right to return. The study of Palestinian communities has exceptional importance at this historical stage where Palestinians are searching for a national identity and the right to establish their independent state. The emigration of an Irishman or an Italian, for example, does not mean in any circumstances, the dissolution of the Irish or the Italian state. But for Palestinians, it is a threat to the Palestinian national identity, future and existence as a whole. This book is based on readings of literature about Palestinians and Arabs in the United States, contacts with many Palestinian Americans and fundamentally on research that was carried out on the Palestinian Americans during the year 1985/86, in which questionnaires were distributed among Palestinians representing a cross-section of attitudes. These Palestinians hail from all parts of the United States, mainly from New York and Washington in the East Coast, and California in the West, Minnesota and Illinois in the North and Texas, Florida and Louisiana in the South. This study analyses the social, economic and political background of those who participated in the research and the effect of this background upon their attitudes towards the Palestinian problem and the various and related aspects of the question of its ultimate resolution.

The present research is of paramount importance in so far as it is representative of the situation of the Palestinian people at home or abroad. It is certainly strange that such studies have not been made of the one-and-a-half million Palestinians who currently form a sizeable proportion of Jordan's population, or of the approximately 300,000 Palestinians living in Kuwait, in spite of the fact that they have the human and material resources to conduct such studies and they have utilized the economic power which the Palestinians' labour has provided. Adequate and sound academic research has not accompanied the involvement of the Palestinians in the international political arena, nor has any in-depth study been proposed to answer some of the questions that form the core of this involvement. Political decisions have been made entirely spontaneously without forethought, and axioms proved false by experience.

To date the closest study of this subject was conducted on the Palestinian Americans by Elias Tuma in 1981, entitled *Palestinians in America*.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, its concentration upon the educated Palestinians in the USA did not make it a representative study, since the disparity between privileged classes and the largely illiterate and semi-illiterate masses, especially in the Third World, is well-known. Thus, a chasm exists in the USA between the academically qualified Palestinians engaged in lucrative professions and their less fortunate compatriots. This study attempts a more comprehensive format embracing as it does the various classes, determined by the social and economic status of the individuals. The Palestinians questioned under this study ranged from academics and students to workers and businessmen.

This study is of topical significance not only for its choice of subject but also because it comes at a time when the so-called 'American solution' to the issue of the Palestinian problem is of current interest to political observers all over the world. The Palestinian community in America serves as a bridge over the chasm through its symbolic significance to the realization of this solution. The Palestinian community in the USA is gaining more political weight and importance because of the many new Palestinian immigrants. It is the biggest Palestinian community outside the Arab World and of a great scientific and material weight. The Palestinian people and their issue are now at a crossroads. The study of Palestinian political attitudes, whether in

the homeland or outside, is a central issue and a pointer towards the right path which the Palestinians should follow to obtain their rights.

This study is the more important because of the lack of such studies on the Palestinian Americans. Apart from the study conducted by Elias Tuma, two other demographic and social studies conducted by Riyad Mansur were published in Arabic in the magazine *Palestine Affairs*.<sup>2</sup> Other studies have been carried out on Arabs in general on a national basis or of Muslim or Christian Arabs on a religious basis. These were studies of the residents of a particular city or state such as Detroit or emigrants from a particular part of historical Palestine like Ramallah.

This research aims to identify and describe the main social variables (social class, religion, educational status and degree of assimilation) which determine the attitudes of Palestinian Americans towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. It focuses on the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian Americans and on their political and social institutions in the USA. Of course this helps to clarify both the general attitude of the Palestinians towards ending the struggle in the area and the argumentative relationship between the Palestinians inside and outside historical Palestine. For this reason it is indispensable to study the relationship between the different social variables and political attitudes towards the different solutions suggested for the Palestinian problem, and proposed means of bringing about such solutions, and also to study other matters such as the attitude of the Palestinians towards the Arab countries and towards the two major political powers, the Soviet Union and USA, which have the greatest influence in the region.

It was not very easy to carry out such a study. There were many illiterate people, especially among the old men and women, and for them to fill up the questionnaire was a big problem which could not be done without the help of others. Another problem which had to be overcome was that of language: the questionnaire was written in English and many people thought that they knew English, as it is one of the conditions for obtaining American citizenship; but later it was discovered that they either did not know the language or they knew how to speak it, but not to read and write it. This made them realise that they knew only common questions such as "Who is the American president?" which is asked in the test for American citizenship. The language was an obstacle which prevented many from answering the questionnaire. Another big problem in collecting data about the situation and attitude of the Palestinians in America was fear - unending fear. The Palestinian who lives in his homeland is afraid of the Israeli authorities. One who lives in an Arab country feels afraid of Israel as well as of that Arab country. One who lives in America feels afraid of America, the Arab countries and Israel. It is a political fear of Americans, the government and the FBI, the American Zionist lobby and the Jewish businessman. It is also economic fear: the fear of the American income tax authorities which prevents a Palestinian from answering a question related to his income. Another reason for not answering questions related to income is fear of other people's envy, a problem which was similarly encountered by the Egyptian researcher Abdo ElKholi when he wrote: 'In fact, this question of total family income was the most difficult one on which to obtain a response; it was such a cause of suspicion that some respondents refused to cooperate in completing the interview'.<sup>3</sup>

There is also what could be called social fear, Palestinian's fear of his own compatriots. He does not want anyone, especially his own relatives, to know his private affairs, in particular, the question of his marital status. Information about women is also considered private. A respectable, young, educated Palestinian in his thirties showed his disgust when he found that the questionnaire included some questions about women. 'We have enough men to ask,' he said. He lives in Paterson in New Jersey where hundreds of Palestinians are living. Ignorance, in addition to poor knowledge of English, made it difficult for many people to understand the proper response to some of the idioms included in the questionnaires. For example, the word 'academic' was understood by some people as the mere knowledge of reading and writing. This added extra complications to the collection of the data.

There was also a group of people who were considered Palestinian Americans who, however, refused to admit this fact, for the mere reason that they were born in



America of foreign mothers. They were mostly from South America and almost completely assimilated into American society. We considered all those who were born in historical Palestine or who are children of Palestinians with American nationality, as Palestinian Americans. But a number of those who come into this category refused to answer the questionnaires.

Other difficulties were also faced in the collection of information about the attitudes of Palestinian Americans. The Palestinian fear of written matters is due to the many conspiracies made against them over the years. When the respondent feels secure, he starts to answer orally more than is required. There is also the problem of discovering the number of Palestinians in the USA because those who are registered in the American immigration departments as Palestinians include only those immigrants from the Gaza Strip. Other Palestinians are registered each under the name of the country where his passport was issued. Until 1899 all emigrants from the Middle East were listed as 'Asians' in the US immigration records. Arabs were registered with the Turks under the title 'Turks in Asia'. Later they were called Syrians. Now the Palestinians are registered under the name of the country they come from, mainly from Jordan, but also Lebanon, Syria and Israel. The Palestinian Community in the USA does not have strong social and political establishments through which contact can be made with them, making it very difficult to reach many of them: some clubs and coffee houses were often the only means to do so.

All the above-mentioned reasons make it difficult to estimate the true number of Palestinian Americans. It has always been an arbitrary guess, and this made it almost impossible to estimate the number of copies of the questionnaire required to make the sample thoroughly representative. Elias Tuma estimated the number of Palestinian Americans at between 30,000 to over 50,000.<sup>4</sup> It has been reported by the Palestine Institute of Statistics<sup>5</sup> that this number is 110,000, while in the Palestinian Statistical Abstract the number has been estimated at 100,000.<sup>6</sup> But Riyadh Mansur estimates their number at 54,570 until 1976.<sup>7</sup> The number of Palestinians outside Arab countries has been estimated at 175,000.<sup>8</sup> Taking into consideration the fact that the majority of these live in the USA, while a small number live in Europe and Australia, and some are in Latin America, one can deduce that the number is approximately 100,000.

Another difficulty which we faced in deciding the number of the Palestinians in the USA is that the sources do not state clearly who are to be considered Palestinian Americans. Could the large number of students who hold a temporary student visa be counted as Palestinian Americans? or only those who have American citizenship or a Green Card?

We have already said that the data on which the present study is based were collected through a questionnaire circulated all over the United States. 370 people answered the questionnaire, of which some 1000 copies were sent out. This questionnaire was meant to measure several aspects of Palestinian American political attitudes. It consisted of over 60 questions covering general background information (religion, social situation, assimilation into American society and social and political beliefs and opinions, especially regarding the solution of Palestine problem). The results were produced and analysed by computer, so these results should be objective.

#### Notes

1. Tuma, 1981
2. Mansur, 1980a and 1980b
3. Elkholy, 1966, 41
4. Tuma, 1981, 2
5. Quoted in Tuma, 1981, 3
6. PLO Central Bureau of Statistics, 1979
7. Mansur, 1980a, 105
8. Said, n.d., 14

## 1. THE PALESTINIANS IN THE UNITED STATES

### History

Since there has not been an independent Palestinian entity for many many years it is not possible to speak about a purely Palestinian immigration to the United States or to any other place in the world. It is also difficult to give a specific date for the beginning of Arab immigration to the United States, which began during Ottoman rule of the Arab lands.

The Palestinians form a minority of the inhabitants of United States. Before 1948, when a lot of Palestinians emigrated as a result of the founding of the state of Israel, the number of people emigrating from their country was very low, as a result of their relatively good economic conditions, which were in contrast to the neighbouring Arab countries. A lot of Syrians, Egyptians and other Arabs and non-Arabs poured into Palestine to work. Thus, the main reason behind Palestinian immigration to the USA was political, which is a motive unlike most of the other Arab immigrations. Palestinian mass immigration began after 1948 when they became stateless. After the annexation of the West Bank to Jordan and the beginning of the administration of the Gaza Strip by Egypt, Palestinian immigration included not only those Palestinians who stayed within the borders of their country, but also the Palestinians who migrated to the neighbouring countries which became another starting point for further immigration. Poverty in these countries and lack of opportunities drove thousands of Palestinians to the Arab Gulf states, Europe and the United States. Then the war of June 1967 and the Israeli occupation of the rest of historical Palestine gave a new impetus to immigration. In the quiet periods between the frequent wars in the Middle East, immigration took place for economic reasons and mostly from poor and rural areas, particularly from the areas that are now called the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. These regions had remained outside Israel before 1967 and are the poorest Palestinian areas.

It is taken for granted that immigration from one country to another is a result of push factors from the first country and attractive elements in the countries emigrated to. Since the hostile elements are available wherever the Palestinians are, whether in historical Palestine or in other Arab countries, the attractive elements decide the form, the manner and the extent of the Palestinian migration to their destination country. The United States was, and still is, to a great extent for the Palestinians living outside it, the land of opportunities and the land of 'milk and honey'.

The first Arabs who emigrated to the US were Christian Syrians, because they were relatively more westernized than Muslims, and their area was a centre for many types of missionary activities: these missionaries were concentrated in some Palestinian areas, particularly in Ramallah where several academic religious institutions were established such as Birzeit college and the 'Friends' school'.<sup>1</sup> 'Moslems' interest in emigrating to America came much later because they feared losing their religion in a country dominated by Christians'.<sup>2</sup> The Muslims came after the Christians and more cautiously because their religion has more antipathy towards western Christian societies. Also, Christian emigration was stimulated by the Ottoman suppression of the non-Muslims in the areas over which the empire extended.

Most of those concerned with the Palestinians and the Arabs in the US tend to divide Palestinian immigration to the US into different waves which depend basically on political events. In general, the division is between three waves: the first before 1948, and the founding of the state of Israel; the second between 1948 and 1967; and the third after the 1967 war when Israel occupied the rest of Palestine and other Arab lands. Although most of the Palestinian emigrants, particularly the early arrivals, to the US come for work, many of the new emigrants came as students and remained after completing their education.

The Palestinian Community in the US is still relatively small, but constantly growing. Although most Palestinians consider their immigration to the US to be temporary in order to collect some money and then return home, contrary, for example,



to 'Japanese, Chinese and Jewish emigration',<sup>2</sup> yet most often they spend all their life there. The influx of Palestinians and Arabs into the US is not always at a constant rate because it is largely governed by American conditions of entry to the US. American immigration laws and regulations sometimes form a great obstacle to immigration. Solutions are quickly found in order to get round these obstacles. In different American cities, I met a lot of Palestinians and Arabs who described the way they arrived in America: some of them went to South America in the beginning, and years later went to the US; some, who are in their twenties, married women in their 70s and swore to the immigration department that they could not live without their wives; others requested the right of political asylum without knowing the meaning of it; and there are illegal immigrants who are afraid of expulsion. Each came by his/her own way, but for the same reason: to earn money and improve their standard of living. Only a few succeeded in achieving their goal and the majority live in a state of continuing misery.

#### The Situation of Palestinian Americans Today: Their Social and Demographic Conditions

Today, about 100,000 Palestinians live in the United States. In 1976, they were distributed in the US as follows: California 21 per cent, Illinois twelve per cent, New York twelve per cent, Michigan eleven per cent, New Jersey seven per cent, Ohio four per cent, Texas three per cent, Puerto Rico three per cent, Maryland three per cent, Pennsylvania two per cent, Massachusetts two per cent, Florida two per cent, Virginia two per cent, Washington one per cent; the rest are scattered in various other parts of the country.<sup>4</sup> It is also important to know that about 81 per cent of the Palestinians in the US are under the age of 40.<sup>5</sup> 60 per cent of our respondents were under 40. This means that they form a big labour force and that a large number of them are well assimilated because many of these young people were born in the US. The Palestinians and other Arabs are usually to be found in the industrial cities. Usually the same areas are inhabited by Blacks, Latin Americans and other minorities who came from the Third World. The white Americans keep far away.

The Palestinians in the US differ in the places of their birth, the places from which they emigrated and the conditions in which they lived before immigration. The largest number of the respondents, 65.8 per cent, were born in historical Palestine, ten per cent were born in Jordan; most Palestinian Americans (54 per cent) are from Jerusalem district, which includes the cities of Ramallah, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem. This has always been the case because the above-mentioned areas are inhabited more by Christians who emigrated to the US earlier than Muslims. The questionnaire reveals that 47 per cent of the respondents had emigrated from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, 23.3 per cent from Jordan, 7.1 per cent from Lebanon and 7.5 per cent from the Arabian Gulf.

When the Palestinians arrived in the US, the proportion of males (60 per cent) was much higher than females (40 per cent),<sup>6</sup> (in the sample 73.8 per cent of males responded, and 26 per cent of females, which means that the majority of women did not want to respond). This is unsurprising because the males come to the US to work and hope to return home. But, in fact, they tend to settle permanently in the US and their wives follow them later on, or they marry either within the Palestinian community or foreign women.

It is recognizable that, although there are many values, such as his family or educational status, that play a role in establishing the social and personal position of the Palestinian in his country or in the Arab countries where Palestinians live, in the US his position is defined mainly by the amount of money he possesses: 'In the US the noble ancestry, which only a few can prove that they have, has been supplanted by wealth as the basis of the social status and high rank.'<sup>7</sup> In the 1970s, the role of the PLO increased and the two elements of wealth and nationalism interwove in defining a person's social rank. They became two complementary elements.

Although the Palestinian community in the US includes a large population of students, educated people and university professors, there is a sizeable proportion of

totally illiterate people or those who are functionally illiterate. 6.7 per cent of our respondents do not read or write at all in any language. 16.4 per cent of our respondents did not reach the preparatory level of school. The highest number of this category of people occurs among elderly women and young women whose parents forced them to leave school in order to keep their good reputation.

It is generally believed that the Palestinians who live in the US enjoy large incomes and that they never know poverty. Every citizen, it is said envies them and hopes to reach their standard. But, in fact, they suffer many social problems of which the most important are relatively low income and unemployment. In spite of this, some of them do become millionaires or multi-millionaires, but these are the exception. It is to be seen from the questionnaire that only 7.8 per cent of our respondents have an annual income of more than 50,000 dollars, and 57.2 per cent do not earn more than 20,000 dollars. The unemployment rate in the Palestinian community in the US in 1976 was 67 per cent.<sup>8</sup> A sizeable proportion of these were under the legal age of work. But also a sizeable proportion of those who are of working age do not work, particularly among women, although there a number of women who work in their husband's stores or in industries. The social system in America makes life easier for the unemployed because the law allows the unemployed a minimum sum of money until they find work. Also there is a welfare system to help needy families.

In addition the unemployed and some of the employed Palestinians find other ways in order to get money, such as gambling, which is very common in the Palestinian community. Gambling takes place in the coffee houses or the clubs of the community or in some places like the casinos in Atlantic City in New Jersey where many Palestinians are present daily in order to gamble. All the different social classes and political groupings go to this city. The more often the person visits the city, the more he gains esteem among the members of his community. The elderly and young, the sons and fathers, the employees and employers, the workers and unemployed, the husbands and wives, the religious and secular, and the right-wing and left-wing, all go from the North East to this city. Gambling is legal because it is nothing more or less than a means of winning money. When I asked one of the engineers why he does not work and only gambles, he said, 'gambling is my job; we came to this country in order to get money and there is no reason to speak about morals. Gambling is a successful means of getting money'.

The Palestinians came to the US having the characteristic of a restrictive traditional society. The early emigrants still have the values that dominated Palestinian society in the 1940s and the 1950s. They think that Palestinian society has remained as they left it then; therefore, a lot of them try to maintain the values of the 50s. The social structure of Palestinian society was transferred to the Palestinian community in the US. The divisions according to the families are evident, although, sometimes, it takes a larger form. There are divisions on the basis of one's village or city or area in the country of origin. There are also big families; among the respondents, around 47.7 per cent of the families number more than six people. The father still has authority in the family, except for the families in which the men married foreign women who are usually from the US or Latin America. A lot of Palestinians worked in South America before they went to the US. 15.8 per cent of the married male respondents have wives from the US and 8.9 per cent from Latin America. Problems emerge because of differences about the way that the children should be brought up and the religion that they should follow. Mostly, these problems lead to separation and the children go with their mother and the father pays financial support. Generally the children of the foreign wives do not know Arabic at all, and their language is either English or Spanish. There is a big culture gap in this situation between the fathers and the children, from which problems emerge particularly when there is a lack of agreement between the husband and the foreign wife on the way they should treat their children. Most often they do not agree, and the treatment of the children is a central reason why the parents separate.

The families that have boys are the luckiest families among the Palestinians in America, while those who have girls have their problems doubled. When the girl is over the age of 18, it means that she has the right to oppose her family legally, and the

right to date men, which is considered unacceptable by the members of the community. Therefore an appreciable proportion of the girls go only to elementary school and then are forced to stay home waiting for a bridegroom, or the girl is sent back to the home country until she gets married. Most Palestinian girls in the US marry at a very early age, although a lot of men go back to the home country in order to get married, because they 'cannot trust' the girls who are brought up in America. In one of the sessions, I heard an old Palestinian man saying that he has a daughter at the age of marriage and is ready to marry her to anyone who is an Arab. He preferred to suffer the 'shame' of looking for a husband for his daughter rather than leave her unmarried. The Palestinian community in the United States, like the rest of the Arab community, continues to a large extent to be fragmented. In spite of the fact that they share the language and the common heritage,<sup>9</sup> they belong to different groups. This differentiation is due to several elements, such as the particular city or village of origin, family, religion, the kind of work practised, and the political orientation which is a recent factor, particularly after the 1982 war and the departure of the Palestinian resistance fighters from Beirut and the consequent schism in the PLO.

Among the Palestinians in America, there are politically-based groups which follow the Palestinian divisions everywhere. Moreover, they are grouped according to the city or village of origin. For example, there is a society for Al-Birch residents, a society for Ramallah residents etc. there are also groups of religious adherents, either Christian or Muslim. Most often the residents of the same area in the country of origin are gathered in one place or close proximity in the United States. For example the families who came from Beit Anan village in the Jerusalem district are found in considerable numbers in Paterson, New Jersey. A person feels secure among the members of his village, and it is easier for him to find a job where other members of his village work.

Different social classes of Palestinians came to the United States: workers, students, farmers and intellectuals. They are distinguished by the fact that most of them are of rural origin. The early migrants included students and intellectuals in addition to workers. A considerable percentage of those who go to the US as students abandon their studies after a period of time. This is due to the nature of American society, and the difficulty they encounter in continuing to work and study at the same time. In order to cover university expenses they leave studying and head towards work. As for the labourers, the elderly in particular, they are generally less educated and aim at fast wealth. Some of them live in a state of social alienation. Most of them, especially those who left agricultural work in their country, are simple and conservative. The more each of them moves away from his simplicity, and the more he becomes immersed in his American-ness, the less he is concerned for the home country's cause.

Their social problems, fragmentation and indifference, after 1982, have increased. The young men who used to hurry towards the battlefields in Lebanon in order to defend the Palestinian resistance, are now thinking twice before donating one dollar for that purpose. The reason for this is not only lack of interest, but also severe disappointment with all the leaderships and the existing situation. This explains why a considerable percentage answered that they do not support any of the existing Palestinian leaderships.

Factory workers also have their specific problems. They usually work in shifts and they choose the most difficult tasks because they are the most profitable. But they therefore face problems with their families (wives and children) since the worker has no time whatsoever to spend with his wife and children.

As for the academic Palestinians, they rarely suffer from the social problems of workers and students. They move away from the American underworld. They have enough time and money to develop their skills and potential, but they are characterized by severe alienation from and contempt for the rest of the community. They also do not practise politics on the level of the regular Palestinian masses in the US, but on the level of political propaganda amongst Americans. In most instances, they compete in planning in order to establish their own special groups, and to prove that they are the most suitable, for playing the role of mediator between American



policy and the Palestinian leadership. During my stay in the US, I attended many popular Palestinian gatherings at the time of feasts, weddings etc. Never did any academic attend any of those gatherings, while many of them were always to be found at the parties of the diplomatic Arab and foreign missions.

There is a big gap between generations among the members of the Palestinian community in the US. This gap is not only related to the difference in age, but also depends on the date of immigration. Mostly Palestinian emigrants are of recent origin. Palestinian immigration was at its peak after 1948, in contrast to the immigration from the other Arab countries. Despite that, even those who immigrated after 1948 now have families, and many of their children were born or raised in the US. 65.5 per cent of the respondents immigrated after 1975. The first generation are characterized by being mostly conservative, uneducated, religious, and only speaking as much English as is needed in their work. Many know the Spanish language since they first immigrated to Latin America and then to the US, where they trade with the Spanish community there. As for the second generation, the children of the first generation, they are the generation where the new American culture interacts with the old Arab culture. Their role is to transfer the original culture from fathers to sons, and to transfer American culture to the fathers: they are students of their fathers in learning Arab culture, and their teachers in educating them in American culture. The parents often resort to their children in order to get help in learning to speak English. These children, born in the US, are now more educated than their parents, but are less nationalistic, as opposed to the new emigrants who enjoy strong national and patriotic feelings. The recent new-comers bring with them a new strong feeling of Arab identity and political consciousness.<sup>10</sup> There are a considerable number of emigrants who were politicized in the home country, be they those who immigrated during Jordanian rule or those who left or were deported during Israeli rule. These people still have their political interests and do not consider their immigration and presence in the US as a privilege. They consider it a privilege to be away from the countries from which they emigrated.

### The Identity Problem

What is required of the Palestinian Americans? Does this differ from that which is required of any other American racial category? Does it contradict what is required of any other Palestinian category? Is the Palestinian American supposed to be more Palestinian or more American? If he is supposed to be American because his citizenship is so, is the Palestinian Jordanian entitled to be Jordanian, the Palestinian Syrian entitled to be Syrian and the Palestinian Israeli entitled to be Israeli? Who then is the Palestinian Palestinian, the pure Palestinian?

The problem I raise here is the problem of identity, 'which has two dimensions: The first deals with how the host country identified the emigrants, and the second with how the emigrants identify themselves'.<sup>11</sup> In spite of the fact that the American immigration offices started registering the Arab new-comers by the name of the country they came from after the 1920s, their being referred to as Arabs became dominant in the popular mind only in the fifties. This is attributed by many of those living during that era to President Abdul Nasir of Egypt and his contribution to the promotion of the issue of Arab nationalism internationally.

Feelings of Palestinian patriotism and Arab nationalism exist to a large extent among the Palestinians, especially those who are recent immigrants. They talk about being from a certain village or city in Palestine even when they have never been to that particular village or city in their lives and do not speak any Arabic. We think that this is the reason for the survival of the Palestinian issue and its growth until now. The distance from Palestine has remained to some extent geographical and not one of patriotism or sense of belonging, but when the father is Palestinian and the mother foreign, then there is a real problem of belonging, especially when the children live in the mother's country for a while. I talked to girls whose father is Palestinian and whose mother is from Puerto Rico, and who have lived for some years in Puerto Rico. The problem of their origin was a very complex one, but they tended to feel predominantly Puerto Rican.

The Palestinian American feels homesick and frightened in America, especially during periods when specific political events are attacked on American television, as part of campaigns against the Palestinians, following 'terrorist' Palestinian operations. He feels insecure, that he could be easily kicked out or have his citizenship withdrawn if the authorities wish it. This is due mostly to influence from the Zionist lobby in the US. This feeling of alienation is asserted once in a while on the assassination of Palestinian figures active in the US, for example the assassination of Alex Odeh, President of the Arab-American Antidiscrimination Committee in California which followed the murder of an elderly American Jew during the hijacking of the "Achille Lauro", or the bombing and destruction of some centres of the PLO factions, and Arab organizations known for their activities which support Palestinian demands for justice. Those who have witnessed the propaganda clamour in the American newspapers and TV over the killing on board the "Achille Lauro", and the total neglect of the murder of Alex Odeh, would realize the degree of American propaganda bias against the Palestinians and the degree of Zionist control over the mass media in the United States.

Very often Palestinian youths, and Arabs in general, tend to change their names, (Ismail becomes Sal and Ali, Al). Although many of the young people I questioned about this attribute this to difficulty in pronunciation by the Americans, it seems that most of them want thereby to hide their Palestinian Arab origins. 9.4 per cent of our respondents answered that they hide their Palestinian origin when dealing with Americans. 12.4 per cent answered that they sometimes do so. Both Samir and Nabil Abraham affirmed that an unfavourable situation developed for the Palestinians among other Americans, even though it may have been indirect, when it was publicized that the Syrians, but not the Palestinians after 1948, had good relationships with other Americans: the antagonism towards them was not obvious, and they did not feel it very much.<sup>12</sup> Another indication of the reluctance of many Palestinians to admit their origin, is that they answer 'from Jerusalem', not only because it is a historically well-known city, but also because it does not suggest only one origin.

Yet nationalist manifestations are increasing in number among Palestinians in America. One such manifestation is that the use and study of Arabic has increased. The Islamic movement has also grown which plays a role in reinforcing the feeling of Arabism in the US. The power which the Zionist movement enjoys in the US, whether in some particular fields, like real estate, or in law, medicine, education, and especially in some areas where there is a high percentage of Jews like New York and New Jersey has made the Palestinians more aware and conscious of their Arabism and their Palestinian identity.

#### The Political Situation

The growth of the Palestinian national movement, the escalation of the Palestinian resistance and the prominent appearance of a Palestinian identity, plus the international acknowledgement of the Palestinian people and their national rights, have played a role in contributing to the growth of the national and patriotic feelings of the Palestinian Americans after the 1967 war. This resulted in the formation of several Palestinian American or Arab-American organizations. There are also among the members of the Palestinian community those who are affiliated to some Palestinian factions in the Palestinian arena.

This popular Palestinian presence in the US is linked to a large extent to the general Palestinian and Arab situation as far as its activity or inactivity are concerned. Palestinian students at the American universities are the most active and enthusiastic in transmitting the Palestinian cause to American public opinion, to the political movements on the American arena and to the political movements in Latin America in particular.

The Palestinian movements in the US are characterized, as shown by the questionnaires of our study, by the fact that there is no Palestinian organization related to Arab regimes in the US, in all the American arena. No respondent approved of the Palestinian organizations sponsored by Iraq, Syria, Jordan or Libya. All but one



of the respondents either were supporters of the organizations that were independent, even if that was in appearances only, or supported no one. This indicates that supporters of these organizations exist only in those countries that have influence. This explains the noticeable variety of Palestinian organizations and exaggeration in the different points of view concerning the ways of solving the Palestinian problem as well as the existing conflict between these organizations which is often a reflection of the conflicts between the Arab countries themselves.

The political cleavages between the members of the Palestinian community in the US are related, to a large extent, to Palestinian political cleavages in general, and reflect greatly on their social and economic relations. During my stay in the US, I came to know some Palestinian retail merchants, who did not buy from other Palestinian merchants for political reasons. But most of them went to buy from 'Jacob', the wholesale merchant in New York. Yet ideological and political differences between them do not imply that there is total separation. Many of them stick together during patriotic and national events. Various people within the community in New Jersey declared their boycott of one of the Syrian groceries in the city of Paterson after the owner issued a statement to the 'Herald News' newspaper in which he supported President Reagan in his strike against Libya in April 1986. The boycott was so successful that the owner of the shop issued a statement apologizing to the Palestinian community.

The political activity of the Palestinians slackened greatly after the Palestinian resistance left Beirut after the 1982 war. After the collection of hundreds of thousands of dollars from the Palestinian community in America for the Palestinian revolution, and after killing and injuring during the battles with the Israelis of a number of fighters who went from the US to Lebanon in order to fight with the 'Fedayeen', we find these days that there are no large-scale donation campaigns. Indeed a higher percentage of the members of the community now avoid such donations. The political seminars which have been advertised lately, have not met with the same fervour as before.

The Palestinians in the US practise their political, social and cultural activities through existing social, political and religious institutions. In addition to churches and mosques, which are considered to be meeting places for members of the community as well as places for prayer, there are also community organizations and ideological and political organizations. Community organizations were originally based on the city or village from which the members of the organization emigrated to the US, i.e. their places of birth if they were not born in the US. The largest such organization is the *American Ramallah Federation*, which consists of people who emigrated from the city of Ramallah to the US with their sons. It was founded in 1957 in Detroit, Michigan. This organization has a monthly magazine published by the Ramallah Community in Detroit. It holds a yearly meeting in the big American cities where emigrants from Ramallah are to be found. There are also organizations similar to the Ramallah Federation carrying the names of other cities and villages in Palestine. The existence of such organizations indicates that there is a desire to organize, but a backward level of social organization.

As for the political and ideological organizations, there are many Arab-American or Palestinian American organizations in addition to supporters of Palestinian organizations. These are:

(i) *The Palestine Congress of North America (PCNA)* founded in 1980. About 20,000 members have joined. It is a registered organization and quite active. It is supportive of the PLO, but it fragmented as a result of the fragmentation within the PLO after the 1982 war in Lebanon and was greatly weakened.

(ii) *The Action Committee on American-Arab Relations*. This organization was established in 1964 by Dr Mehdi, an Iraqi by birth. Among the stated goals of this organization are that it opposes communism, fascism, antisemitism and Zionism. Note this mixture of ideologies which the organization opposes, with the purpose of assimilation to the US, on the one hand, and accordance with its nature as an organization involved with Arabs, on the other. What is also noticeable is the order in which this organization placed the ideologies it opposes, starting with communism and

moving up to Zionism. These declared goals, as well as those of other Arab-American organizations, make them the object of suspicion of Palestinian-American national and leftist elements in particular.

(iii) *The National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA)*. This organization was founded in 1972 in Virginia. Its main goal is to publicize the Arab cause and to try to minimize the US bias towards Israel.

(iv) *Association of Arab American University Graduates Inc. (AAUG)*. It was founded as a result of the 1967 war, in the city of Boston, Massachusetts. The goals of the AAUG are:

- (a) To establish links between Arab American professionals and promote cooperation in their respective professions.
- (b) To utilize the professional know-how of Arab Americans in the service of their communities.
- (c) To disseminate accurate scientific cultural and educational information about the Arab world.
- (d) To assist in the development of the Arab world by providing the professional services of its members whenever the needs of the former and the talents of the latter coincide.

Through these various objectives the AAUG aims at strengthening the bonds of understanding and friendship between the Arabs and the American people.<sup>13</sup> In order to realize these goals the AAUG also publishes studies pertaining to Arab-American relations, as well as holding its annual conferences in the form of big scientific and political demonstrations.

There are also Arab-American organizations of a business nature, which are either official or semi-official, e.g. the *US-Arab Chamber of Commerce* whose headquarters are in New York, and which has branches in some other American cities, and the *Holy Land Fund* - established by wealthy Arab Americans in 1969 in order to supply Palestinians with humanitarian aid.

In addition to these, which are Arab-American in nature, and have a formal style, there are organizations which are totally and predominantly Palestinian, which are usually part of general Palestinian organizations like the *Palestine Women's Federation* and the *General Federation of Palestinian Students*. Although these organizations have a noticeable mass activity, be it among the Palestinian community itself or in explaining the Palestinian cause to the other American and foreign organizations, yet these organizations are severely divided due to the fragmentation that has occurred within the PLO. This fragmentation is the most obvious in the General Federation of Palestinian Students which split into two federations, while a third one has adopted the Islamic religious orientation. This is the *Federation of Muslim Students* established in 1963. The attempts of each of the first two factions of the student federation to prove its 'legitimacy' and 'weight' in the American arena occupy a lot of the time and activity of Palestinians in the US. Women's social and political activities face more difficulties than that of the student because of the social obstacles faced by women in work and, in particular, in political activity. The women play a significant role in setting up Palestinian folkloric exhibitions and establishing links with American women's organizations.

Despite that, Palestinian American activity on the level of supporting Palestinian rights in their home country is still weak. Although it has been growing in the last two decades, their activity in terms of participating in American political life seems weaker. Although there was a relative conviction (Strongly 63.6 per cent + Mildly 21.7 per cent) among a large number of respondents in the sample we used in our research, of the necessity of an Arab lobby in the US and the necessity of activating this lobby so that it would be an opponent to the Zionist lobby there, yet a high percentage amongst those respondents did not themselves participate in voting at American elections. Around 70.7 per cent were negative about participation in American political life. Many of them even considered such participation to be a kind of assimilation that is rejected, or even a kind of complicity with the Americans who according to them stand by Israel. Many of them, in spite of carrying American

citizenship, do not consider American politics to be their concern and most of the time care only about the aspect that deals with American policy in the Middle East.

15.2 per cent of the respondents answered that they vote for the Democratic Party, while 9.2 per cent of them vote for Republicans, at a time when those remaining answered that they do not vote for anyone. Some studies show that the general direction of allegiance for the majority of Arab Americans is to the Republicans, in spite of the fact that most of those in the American Congress who are of Arab origin were representatives of the Democrats.<sup>14</sup> The Palestinian academics were divided among the parties as follows: 29.8 per cent were Republicans and 21.3 per cent were Democrats.<sup>15</sup> Yet this does not mean that they would always support the Democrats' representatives' especially in the municipal elections, through which they usually get tangible promises of better treatment for the Islamic community. I attended a meeting for the 'Islamic' community, the Turks and the Arabs (Syrians and Palestinians) in Passaic County in New Jersey, to which the Republican candidate was invited. The enthusiasm of the speakers supporting the candidates was exceptional. After the meeting was officially over, the lecturers affirmed that they would work on supporting the Republicans although the dominant impression is that the Democrats are closer to Arab views. However, the Republicans worked on improving the tax rates and reducing the price of houses.

It became evident to us that the more assimilated the Palestinian American is in American society, the more he will actively participate in American political life. Usually Palestinian American participation in municipal elections is more significant than his participation in the Presidential or Congressional elections. As we have said, they expect to receive gains on the community level in a particular city. They are, however, perfectly aware that it is not possible to influence the higher policy of the state which is supportive of Israel owing to the control of the Zionist lobby over it.

Most of the time the community decides to support a candidate for the municipality because, for example, the leader, or one of the leaders, of the community has asked them to do so without stating the logical reasons behind this support. I heard a leader explaining the necessity of supporting a particular candidate because he does not succumb to 'Jewish pressure' in the city, at the same time as some young people who opposed him asserted that this support is requested because that person works in real estate and has a business relationship with the mayor. The Palestinians finally supported this candidate, against a black candidate, in one of the biggest cities in the state of New Jersey.

Two factors further complicate the Palestinian condition in the US, making them 'unwanted' people and hindering the assimilation process in American society. First: their pitiful image as Arabs in the American mind. This is enhanced by their being described in all the mass media as terrorists; secondly: their struggle there is centred foremost on the Jewish community and the Zionist movement, which has a great power in all the institutions, in particular the economic and educational ones. One of my impressions there was that the Arab in the mind of the normal American means an antagonistic wealthy bedouin who is sexually promiscuous, and is not to be trusted. As for the Palestinian, he is in addition to all that a killer and a terrorist. In a survey of elementary and junior high school social science textbooks used in the California educational systems, Ayad al-Qazzaz found that nomadic bedouin, who account for only five to eight per cent of the total Arab population, provide the basic educational information about Arab society. Indeed, in a survey of 251 junior and senior high school students, this author found that more than half of them characterized the Arabs as a desert people.<sup>16</sup>

Given that the popular American outlook towards the Palestinians and Arabs in the US is negative, the official American view is by no means better. The American government officially started to watch them during the time of President Nixon in 1972. It did happen that some Palestinians carrying American citizenship were banished from the US due to their political activities.

The Jewish community in the US is large, organized and strong. It is known as a community whereas the Palestinians there are known as a few individuals as a result of their academic and economic activity. The Jews in America, especially the religious



ones, are found in particular areas. They have their own synagogues, schools, universities, hospitals and organizations. They are usually characterized by great loyalty to the social institution within which they find security and work. In addition to that, as will be clear later, the Jewish community is in perfect harmony with American society, and considers its interests to be perfectly compatible with the interest of the US, while the majority of the Palestinian community considers the US to be an ally of Israel at the expense of the rights of the Palestinian people.

Many Jewish Americans with whom I have discussed the Palestinian problem, believe that it is an internal Israeli issue, as the problem of minorities of the world is internal. One of the manifestations of this notion is that the *Journal of Palestine Studies* edited by the well-known Palestinian American, Professor Hisham Sharabi, is found in the Jewish division in the public library in New York.

In spite of this, the situation is not desperate for the Palestinians in the US. On the contrary, it has motivated them to try to search for a formula which would relieve this situation. The establishment of a relatively large number of Palestinian institutions and organizations in the US was a reaction, on the part of some active Palestinians and Arabs, to the spread of Zionist influence in the US. The Palestinians in America have a strong feeling that the Zionist lobby is in control, at least over the foreign policy of the US, and when asked whether the Palestinian American believes that the Zionists influence the foreign policy of the US, 85.6 per cent of respondents answered 'yes' strongly and 5.9 per cent answered 'mildly'. Also the Palestinians in America have a strong feeling of guilt because they have not been able to do as much as the Jews in defending their cause.

#### Assimilation

There is no doubt that assimilation into American society influences most aspects of the social life of the Palestinian American and his political views, especially those related to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Based on that, it is essential to know the degree of assimilation and the positive or negative factors affecting it. In the questionnaire, I tried to concentrate on the various indices of assimilation, e.g. the degree of the person's knowledge of the English language, the language used when talking to Arabs, the length of stay in the US, whether he hides his Palestinian nationality or his Arab identity when dealing with Americans, whether he has visited or will visit his homeland and the Arab countries, the style of upbringing that he used or will use with his children, the degree of his participation in American political life, and finally whether he will return to live in his homeland if that is possible for him.

In fact there are a lot of cultural obstacles which prevent the total assimilation of the Palestinian in American society. The attitude of that society itself towards the Palestinian will also be an obstacle to assimilation. It is easy for a minority to assimilate when its interests are compatible with American views in American society, while this is difficult for the Palestinians who face negative popular, propagandist and official attitudes of Americans towards them and their causes. These reasons have made it somewhat difficult to integrate in American society, except in the underworld, which is 'international' in all meanings of the word. In any case, the factor of time plays an encouraging role in Americanizing the Palestinians and any other minority in the US. Yet the Americanization of Palestinians and Arabs in America remains a random process. This is due to the difference in their professions and level of culture, and is also because, at the beginning of their immigration there, they worked in peddling. Indeed, 'peddling must be held to be the major factor in explaining the relatively rapid assimilation of Arabic-speaking immigrants before World War I'.<sup>17</sup> The economic activity of the Palestinians and other Arab immigrants has placed them in direct contact with other Americans. This was the primary encouragement for assimilation.

In reality, the more conservative Palestinians are those most resistant to Americanization as well as resistant to any form of social change. Hence we noticed that the majority of Palestinians in the US are divided between conservative people, or people Americanized to an appreciable degree.

## Religion

We have previously mentioned that the Christian Arabs immigrated before the Muslims. This was the case with the Palestinians as well. 18.2 per cent of our Christian respondents arrived in the US before 1967 and three per cent of them before 1948, whereas Muslims arrived in the US at the rate of 7.9 per cent before 1967 and 0.5 per cent before 1948. It is to be noticed that the Christian Palestinians came from urban areas whereas Muslims came to a large extent from rural areas. Of our Christian respondents 90 per cent came from a town or city, whereas only 60 per cent of the Muslims answered that they came from an urban centre.

54.7 per cent of the respondents came from the Jerusalem area, (Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem) where the Christians form an appreciable proportion of the inhabitants. It is significant to point out that the variety of places from which the Palestinians came to the US plays a big role in the degree of religiosity. The most religious of the Palestinian Americans among our respondents are those who were living in the Arabian Gulf countries before they emigrated. The ones who were the least religious were those living in Lebanon. Those who were living in the West Bank, were always used as our standard. As in the home country, the Christian Palestinians tend to be more educated than the Muslims, as is the case with any minority careful about promoting its condition. 6.7 per cent of our Muslim respondents are illiterate, 2.4 per cent of the Christians are so. The extent of higher education in the two populations was similar.

Despite the fact that there are some differences between Muslim and Christian Palestinians in America concerning the date of immigration, education and assimilation in American society, there is no evidence of sectarian strife between them. This seems to be basically due to the good relationship between the two sides which prevail in the home country, contrary to other Arab countries. This is also considered to be an indication of the strong influence of Arab nationalism on Muslim, and to the same extent Christian, Palestinians in the US. They generally work together towards achieving their goal by means of national and other existing secular organizations. Although this condition is obviously predominant among the Palestinians, yet there are some who generalize this to all the Arabs: 'Moslems from Arab countries work closely with their Christian compatriots in all matters affecting Arabs in general'.<sup>18</sup>

Historically the practice of Islam started in the US around the year 1900, when the first collective prayer was held in the city of Ross in North Dakota,<sup>19</sup> while the first mosque in the US was erected in the year 1920.<sup>20</sup> Another opinion states that the first mosque in the US was erected in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.<sup>21</sup> This difference over the date of the first mosque in the US could result from the fact that the first mosque was demolished, when most of the Muslims in that area converted to Christianity, changed their names and deserted the mosque. By the year 1980, there were in the US about 400 mosques and Islamic societies, as well as a large number of Eastern churches. These have basic religious and social functions. Such churches and mosques function as important transitional links tying Arab communities in the US to the Arab world, reinforcing the traditional values of the old country and preserving ethnic identity. They not only provide facilities for worship in their own way, conduct marriage and funeral ceremonies, celebrate religious occasions, and teach religion, but they are also places for social and political activities, for the exchange of gossip and information about the community in the US and overseas. They are places for social occasions; the same loudspeaker which broadcasts recorded Quranic verses or Bible readings on Friday or Sunday, broadcasts Arabic music or modern music on other days. They are places for giving receptions for Arab dignitaries visiting the communities and hosting the gatherings of other Arab organizations lacking space of their own to conduct activities. Also, they often function as hostels for new emigrants without places to live upon their arrival, and thus provide comfort and security.

These churches and mosques arranged mixed parties for young people to enable them to meet the opposite sex, thereby encouraging them to choose a partner of Arab background when they reach adulthood and in so doing, preserve the cohesiveness of their group and keep alive the Arab heritage.<sup>22</sup> This is an indication that mosques and



churches in the US are influenced by the nature of social life there, they are places where money is collected, charity bazaars and dinner parties are held for the community, and cultural events are celebrated. In addition the 'Imam' of the mosque in the US is the one who resolves conflict between aged and religious persons. He 'legislates and executes' in order to return the 'rights' to their owner, be he Muslim or non-Muslim in the case where these rights belong to a religious Muslim. These are the differences between Arab places of worship in the US and those in the home country.

There are also differences between the religious practices, especially the Muslim ones, in the US and those in the home country, where the practice in the new country adapts to the social nature of the country and the type of jobs which the individuals in the community there have. The collective prayers, for example, are converted into Sunday prayers where it is not possible to carry them out on Friday which is a working day. Friday is transferred to Sunday. It is not possible either for the employees to pray five times a day, which is only done by the retired, elderly and the unemployed. In addition, the workers in factories which require physical effort are unable to fast in Ramadan with the result that the incidence of fasting among them is low. The Islamic Centre in Jersey City arranges monthly assembly for worship on the first Saturday of the month, (note: Saturday) where dinner is served. Beyond this there is a collective breakfast on Sunday morning, in order to combine the necessity of performing religious duties and business in spite of the fact that the invitation to the assembly of worship starts with the Quranic verse: "By men whom neither trade nor merchandise can divert from the remembrance of God" (see appendix A).

It was not possible to adapt business and financial transactions in the same way: bank loans cannot be handled without interest. It is not possible for a Muslim to put his money in an American bank without receiving interest on it (*riba*). Those Muslims who own grocery stores trade in alcoholic beverages and adult magazines no matter how religious they may be. A trader in upstate New York, originally from Shu'fat in the Jerusalem area, told me that the best he could do when he wants to sell beer is either to repeat the Quranic verse *Al-Fatiha* or wrap the can in a piece of paper so that his hand does not touch it. This is also done by left-wing Palestinian merchants in selling adult magazines, although they speak to you of the immorality of reading them. When I asked one of them the reason for selling them, he answered that he would lose more than half of his customers if he stopped. Business in the US is the master: it cannot be superseded by any principle or any religion.

There are differences between religion in the Arab region, and the same religions in the US, especially as far as Islam is concerned from the intellectual point of view. Islam and Islamic movements in the Arab countries contradict the concept of nationalism and its organization to a large degree, in spite of the strong historical relationship between Islam and Arabism. It is a stubborn barrier to Americanization and is a resort for all those escaping from American social life which seems strange to them. The Islamic religion in the US has become, to a large extent, a national and ethnic religion, like Judaism. Consequently when a meeting was held to discuss the building of a mosque for the Palestinians in New Jersey, it was attended by leftists and even atheists who spoke of the necessity of building the mosque. They do not consider the mosque to be a place for worship only, but a place where they preserve their Arabism and that of their children, as well as a place for studying the Arab heritage, culture and the Arabic language. The mosque is - 'a symbol for the unity of the community'.<sup>23</sup>

Yet the Islamic religion has become politicized in the Palestinian and other Arab communities, although it was alienated from politics until the 1970s. This resulted from an appreciable number of new emigrants who belonged to Islamic political parties, and because of the sudden coming to power of the fundamentalist Muslims in Iran. The seventies witnessed a return to traditional Islam,<sup>24</sup> and this process is known as the reform movement. Faith is known to be wide-spread mostly among the elderly and illiterate women, but politicized traditional Islam has spread among the educated groups and university students who belong to Islamic societies and unions which have grown up in the various parts of the US. These are supported most of the time by rich Islamic countries, Saudi Arabia in particular.

One of the factors which encourages the growth of followers of the Islamic reform movement, in addition to the in-pouring of young emigrants and the spread of Islamic literature in the US, is the culture-shock which the Arab faces when he goes to America. This is due to the big discrepancy in the customs, traditions, values and concepts between the cultures, so that Islam becomes their only resort, especially in view of the almost total absence of socialist thinking, and the significant war which the American mass media wage against this thinking. 'Muslim political and cultural activity, like the Muslim population, is on the rise in the US. This is due in part to the current nation-wide trend of ethnic consciousness and to a desire to organize at least as effectively as the Jewish community has done'.<sup>25</sup>

The outreach of the Islamic religious parties to the Palestinian community in the US was a cause of the existence of a conflict between the devout Palestinian masses there and the fundamentalists who seem to the public, to be more extremist and puritanical, with political goals far from religion. In the ranks of the non-politicized is the new generation which grew up in the US, reacting against the traditional puritanism of the formerly religious people, and especially against their intervention in the behavioural problems of members of the community. Such members have been affected by the nature of American society, which does not place acceptable behaviour within a certain framework, and does not even have a clear-cut definition for what is acceptable. We can say that many Muslim Palestinians who grew up in the US believe in Islam. But if it is to be compared with Islam in the Arab world and the mode of practice of that Islam, then it would be found to be very different from it. We can call Islam in the US and its manner of application: 'The religion of Arabs in America'.

Religion, especially Islam, is a great barrier to assimilation in American society. It will be clear shortly that the Islamic religion plays a big role in focussing Palestinian American political beliefs. As for Christianity, it is less resistant to assimilation in American society, where there is a rapprochement between the Christian and American cultures. The Orthodox are those Christians most resistant to assimilation.

Although 'American' Islam is on the rise among Palestinian Americans, fundamentalist Islam is growing at the expense of the approval of liberal thinking, which is found among them. Although Islamic fundamentalism aims at attacking the Palestinian left in America and in the home country most of all, yet together with the left they are gradually but confidently invading the middle positions in Palestinian American spheres.

#### Notes

1. Mansur, 1980a, 85
2. Al-Qazzaz, 1979, 11
3. Ismael, 1976, 393
4. Mansur, 1980b, 97
5. Mansur, 1980a, 105
6. Mansur, 1980a, 97
7. Abraham, 1985, 30
8. Mansur, 1980a, 90
9. Naff, 1985, 7
10. Gottesman, nd, 5
11. Al-Qazzaz, 1979, 27
12. Abraham & Abraham, 1985, 36
13. Al-Qazzaz, 1979, 46
14. Abraham & Abraham, 1985, 58
15. Tuma, 1981, 9
16. Ismael, 1976, 395
17. Naff, 1985, 1
18. Al-Qazzaz, 1979, 185
19. Naff, 1985, 132
20. Abraham & Abraham, 1985, 124

19. Naff, 1985, 132
20. Abraham & Abraham, 1985, 124
21. Gottesman, nd, 1
22. Al-Qazzaz, 1979, 40-41
23. Abraham & Abraham, 1985, 38
24. Abraham & Abraham, 1985, 117
25. Al-Qazzaz, 1979, 85

## 2. PALESTINIAN AMERICANS AND THE PALESTINE QUESTION

It is difficult to find a Palestinian anywhere in the world who is unaware of the various aspects of the Palestinian problem and who does not have views on the ways in which it can be resolved. Decades of experience have made the Palestinians a highly political people, and this is as true of the Palestinian community in the United States as it is of any other. "Unlike earlier arrivals, post-1948 Arab immigrants have characteristically been more educated and politicized."<sup>1</sup> The majority of post-1948 Arab immigrants were Palestinians.

The complex nature of the Palestinian question, the differing conditions in which Palestinians live as a consequence of the diaspora and a variety of other social, economic and political factors, have led Palestinians to adopt a number of approaches towards the matter of how best to resolve their problem. They differ on the various issues of which part of their country they want, how to regain it, whether or not they want a Palestinian state, the nature and features of such a state and its capital. They differ on the ideology to be adopted, whether or not to accept the State of Israel and, if they do, on the nature of the relationship to be established with it. They differ on who are their enemies and who are their allies and the appropriate response to each.

It is their direct contact with their homeland that impels Palestinians in the US towards ever-greater politicization. It is clear that the fluctuating fortunes of the Palestinian resistance have had a profound impact on the community's degree of commitment to the Palestinian cause. "Recent studies, however, have revealed that certain immigrant groups maintain extremely close contact with the mother country."<sup>2</sup> An understanding of the full implications of these statements, requires a thorough examination of a number of aspects of the Palestinian question, and detailed consideration of Palestinian American attitudes towards it.

### Attitudes towards the PLO

Representation, for the Palestinians, is a very important and complex issue, because of the difficulty of having a leadership emerge by traditional electoral methods when four-fifths of a people are living in exile. Heated disputes take place amongst Palestinians themselves concerning the issue of representation, and also between Palestinians and Israel, and between Palestinians and the Arab states. These latter battles by no means ended with the 1974 Rabat Arab Summit Resolution recognizing the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

It is clear that the Palestinian Americans, regardless of their age, profession, their place of origin, their academic level, social condition, and their educational, social and religious background, all with a few exceptions, support the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians; 74 per cent of our respondents support the PLO strongly, 13 per cent support it with reservations, and only five per cent do not consider it the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians.

Discussion with some of those who expressed reservations about the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people revealed that this did not necessarily imply support for alternative political bodies, simply that the individuals questioned disagreed with certain courses of action adopted by the PLO leadership. With this in mind it can be stated that 87.3 per cent of all respondents do, to a greater or lesser degree, support the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians. Many spoke of the pride of the Palestinian community when Yasser Arafat delivered his speech before the United Nations General Assembly in 1974: the day on which the world recognized the Palestinians as a people.

The most influential factor concerning respondents' support for the PLO was the extent to which members of the US Palestinian Community have become assimilated into American society, which is greatly identified by place of birth and upbringing. A close link was found to exist between respondents' place of birth and their support of the PLO. Of those people born in historical Palestine, 92 per cent back the PLO, as compared with 89 per cent of those born in Jordan, and 87.5 per cent of those born in Lebanon. The corresponding figure for those born in America was 45



per cent. It is worth noting that only five per cent of American-born Palestinians do not consider the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, the remaining 50 per cent having answered "don't know", which means that either they have no idea about the PLO, or that they are not at all concerned with it. It is therefore abundantly clear that American-born Palestinians are more fully assimilated into US society than those born in other countries.

Lebanese-born Palestinians demonstrated a higher percentage of anti-PLO feeling since this group is characterized by its radicalism, and it can be concluded that they are anti-PLO because they see the organization as insufficiently revolutionary. The role played by assimilation into American society in defining the Palestinian Americans' attitude towards the PLO, is highlighted by the extent of the respondents' knowledge of the Arabic language. Approximately seven per cent of those unfamiliar with Arabic do not support the PLO, as against 25 per cent who do, while 68 per cent "had no idea". Increased Americanization seems unrelated to either support for, or antagonism towards the PLO, but rather appears to lead to increased neutrality towards the organization or declining knowledge about it.

Attempts were made to evaluate additional factors relating the influence of assimilation on an individual's support for the PLO and it was discovered that the language commonly used by the respondent was indicative. 93.6 per cent of those who expressed support for the PLO habitually used only Arabic, and can therefore be considered less well-assimilated into American society than the 8.3 per cent of English-only speaking PLO-supporters. None of the latter group rejected the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, but 91.7 per cent replied that they had no views on the subject. The corollary to the issue of the language a Palestinian American normally uses, is the nationality of his friends: 92.3 per cent of those who have Arab friends support the PLO, while 58.8 per cent of those with American friends have no idea, which shows the great indifference among the Americanized concerning the representation of the Palestinians.

Another factor considered in assessing the influence of assimilation into American society on respondents' attitudes towards the PLO is the manner in which an individual chooses to bring up his/her children. 47.7 per cent of those who opted to bring up their offspring along American lines supported the PLO and not one person from this group expressed opposition to the PLO, although 52.3 per cent said they had no firm views on the subject. This result is in line with other signs of assimilation where a sizeable proportion said that they had no views on the question of PLO-representation because it is a subject which does not concern them. Of those who chose to bring up their children in the traditional Arab way, 91.8 per cent are pro-PLO and 5.5 per cent anti-PLO. Nearly all those questioned from this latter group expressed an attitude towards the PLO, one way or another.

In this study, we tried to assess the extent of the influence of assimilation into American society on the Palestinian Americans. Therefore we concentrated on the significance of the signs of assimilation on the attitudes we want to study. Attention was also paid to the extent to which respondents kept abreast of current affairs in the home country and the influence of this factor on their attitude towards the PLO. It was found that 92.2 per cent of those who follow Palestinian news support the PLO, while 5.6 per cent oppose it; 84.7 per cent of those who follow the news "occasionally" support the PLO, and 4.2 per cent are opposed to it, while the remaining 11.1 per cent had no opinion. Of those who do not follow events in the home country at all (and who are the most Americanized of the respondents) 33.3 per cent support the PLO, 66.7 per cent have no views on the subject, and none at all are against it. This corresponds with replies given on previously-mentioned factors.

The final element taken into account in this section of the survey was the individual's desire to return to live in historical Palestine were such a possibility offered him, or in the event of a solution being found to the Palestinian problem. Answers to this hypothetical question revealed that those least likely to leave the United States were also those least supportive of the PLO. 60 per cent of those reluctant to return were pro-PLO, 92.5 per cent of those wishing to return are pro-



PLO, and 75 per cent of those who did not know whether or not they might return, given the opportunity, were pro-PLO.

The proportion of PLO supporters among those reluctant to leave the US is quite substantial. This would seem to indicate that a certain number of them who are not necessarily totally assimilated feel that their family and economic circumstances would make it difficult for them to return. Respondents who expressed a desire to return were accused of idealism and unreality; if returning becomes possible, those who will return will be much fewer in number than those stating they wish to now.

It appears obvious from the above that the degree of a Palestinian American's assimilation into American society has a considerable influence on his attitude towards the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Every so often, the American mass media choose a group of people to represent the Palestinian people in the suggested peace negotiations, but not the PLO.

Other social elements such as the profession, income-bracket, level of education, etc, appeared to have little or no impact on the Palestinian American's attitude towards the PLO. Religion also played a minor role, although two definite elements emerged: first that Christians are more easily assimilated in American society (and their attitude towards the PLO is thereby affected) and secondly that some Muslims support Islamic movements that are not merely outside the PLO, but often actively against it. Among Christian respondents, 76.2 per cent were pro-PLO, and among Muslims the corresponding figure was very close - 73.7 per cent. None of the Christians interviewed expressed reservations in their support for the PLO, and none were against it, but approximately one quarter said they had no opinion. 15.4 per cent of Muslims expressed reservations in their support for the PLO, and 6.1 per cent were against it. The fact that some 25 per cent of the Christians questioned declined to express any views on the subject of the PLO, reveals their higher degree of assimilation into US society. Generally speaking the less devout the Palestinian American, the more he is likely to support the PLO. Respondents who "always" attended places of worship (whether Muslim or Christian) expressed strong support for the PLO by 72.1 per cent, while non-believers were 82.6 per cent pro-PLO. 11.6 per cent of those who "always" attend places of worship are anti-PLO, as are 2.9 per cent of those who "occasionally" attend; none of the non-believers rejected the PLO.

#### Attitudes towards a resolution of the Palestinian problem

All Palestinians agree that there is a Palestinian problem and that they have been robbed of their rights, but this does not prevent them from disagreeing about the most appropriate ways to go about having these rights restored. Some believe that a military solution is the only feasible answer and others reject this option in favour of a political approach. A third group prefers a combination of the two. Even within adherents of one approach, there is disagreement about the best way to implement their preferred course of action.

Those who support the military solution are divided on whether it should take the form of an Islamic Jihad or more conventional warfare backed up by guerrilla action. For some, a political approach implies negotiating with Israel, either directly or through an international peace conference with or without the participation of the Soviet Union. Palestinians' divergent views on this subject reflect attitudes that are either fundamentally subjective or result from objective consideration.

When Palestinians living in the United States were questioned on their views regarding a political solution, 8.9 per cent of those interviewed expressed a strong preference for it, 31.2 per cent expressed a slight preference, 45 per cent were against it and 14.9 per cent had no ideas at all on the subject. When asked about a military solution, 44.9 per cent stated that this was the only possible approach, 27.8 per cent were in favour but with reservations, 17.9 per cent were against and 9.4 per cent had no ideas at all. Taken as a whole, this seems to reveal that the US Palestinian community has little confidence in a political solution and would rather opt for a military approach, on the grounds that no political solution will lead to Israeli recognition of Palestinian rights. During the course of subsequent discussion, some of

those questioned elaborated on their answers by saying that the reason they opted for a political solution is that they do not believe that either the Palestinians or the Arabs as a whole are capable of defeating a strong American-backed Israel. An analysis of the relevant social variables affecting the opinions of the Palestinian community on the issue of a solution, revealed a number of interesting points. For example, 47.4 per cent of all males interviewed were in favour of a military approach (32.6 per cent of them, however, with reservations) with 15.8 per cent against; while 32.5 per cent of female respondents were in favour (15.3 per cent with reservations), 23.6 per cent against and 23.6 per cent with no idea. In each of the two categories (male and female) the percentage of those with "no idea" was almost equivalent to the sum total of those for and against a military approach. In the case of the women questioned, the high proportion of those with "no idea" may be accounted for by their political backwardness or by illiteracy. The younger generation is more inclined to opt for a military approach than older members of the community; 47.5 per cent of respondents under 40 favoured it, while only 16.8 per cent rejected it. Of those over 40, only 32.7 per cent expressed a preference for a military approach.

Many young Palestinian Americans are known to have joined the resistance and supported the revolution during the wars in Lebanon, and they were no doubt influenced by the American government's decision to extradite the young Palestinian Ziad Abu Ein to Israel where he was wanted on charges of involvement in planting a bomb in Jerusalem. A sizeable proportion of the Palestinians in the US were born either in historical Palestine or in the US. A number of them, however, also emigrated from neighbouring Arab countries, principally Jordan and, to a lesser degree, Lebanon, Syria and Egypt. The place of their birth was found to play a major role in determining Palestinians' attitude towards a military solution of the situation.

Those who were born in Arab countries (Lebanon excepted) expressed the strongest rejection of a military solution: 28.6 per cent of those from the Gulf states were against it and 25 per cent of those from Jordan. The highest proportion of those with "no idea" regarding the issue of a military approach had been born in the United States. Lebanese-born Palestinians were most strongly in favour of a military approach (56.3 per cent) while only 25 per cent of American-born Palestinians fell within the same category. The fact that a considerable number of those Palestinians born in Arab countries favoured a military solution may perhaps be accounted for by their precarious position in those countries, and by feelings that they are not on an equal footing with the nationals. A number of factors have played a role in strengthening the "Palestine-bond" experienced by many Palestinians born, or at present living, in America or Latin America, not least among them the refugee-host\* relationship that governs so much of their lives. Perhaps the most noteworthy fact is that it is easier for a Palestinian to be assimilated into American or Latin American society than into that of Arab countries such as Jordan, Kuwait or Lebanon. In the Middle East this has perversely had a very positive effect on the Palestinian question, because Palestinians in those Arab societies have counteracted their feelings of inferiority by joining the revolution and fighting to regain their lost rights.

In addition to their place of birth, Palestinian Americans' place of residence prior to immigration to the United States also constitutes an important factor in their attitude towards a military solution to the Palestinian problem. The questionnaire revealed that a military solution enjoys less support among those Palestinian Americans who were living in Israel before moving to the States, or who emigrated before 1948 from the areas which now make up the State of Israel. This can be interpreted as meaning that those who have lived some part of their lives in Israel are unwilling to countenance a military approach, and those who emigrated before 1948 are now ageing and, in their youth, received little or no education. It has already emerged from statistics quoted earlier that the age of respondents is in inverse proportion to their inclination to opt for a military solution.

\*This survey was carried out during the First War of the Camps in Beirut between the Amal militia and the Palestinians.

Palestinians differ from people of other nations in that a large proportion of them live in refugee camps either in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip or in neighbouring Arab states to which they were forced to flee, abandoning their homes, in the wars of 1948 and 1967. It was therefore felt useful to evaluate the differing attitudes of Palestinians from towns, villages or refugee camps. It emerged that the percentage of support for a military solution was almost the same from all three groups (50 per cent of refugee respondents, 52.7 per cent of villagers and 45.9 per cent of town dwellers). It was nevertheless noted that 8.3 per cent of refugees questioned rejected the concept of a military solution, compared to 13.8 per cent of villagers and 19.4 per cent of townscopelike. The wretched situation in the camps makes it logical for there to be less opposition to a military solution among the refugees than among the other two categories. The high rate of illiteracy, political ignorance and certain feelings of apprehension may be behind the high proportion (25 per cent) of refugee respondents who chose to reply, "no idea" when asked about a military solution. The equivalent figure from villagers was 4.6 per cent and from townscopelike, 4.1 per cent. One of the prevailing divisions among the Palestinian community in the US is based on their respective levels of education. Illiteracy exists among both men and women and there is also a group of semi-literate women who were withdrawn from education when they reached the age of eleven or twelve. On the other hand, Palestinians constitute a considerable body of scientists and professors in major American universities. The survey revealed that in general the more highly educated Palestinian-Americans questioned were more in favour of a military solution. Although university-educated Palestinians (both graduates and undergraduates were included in this category), particularly graduates, offered relatively little strong support for a military solution (20.4 per cent), those who supported it with reservations were numerous (47.2 per cent). There was little strong support for a military solution either from those who had received a university education or from among the ranks of the illiterate. Where the two groups differed radically was in response to the question of whether they supported a military solution with reservations. The illiterates, reflecting a preference for a "black-or-white" approach, registered zero per cent for the reservationist response - unlike the university-educated (42.7 per cent) but 41.6 per cent of them fell into the "no idea" category.

Their broad range of educational levels inevitably places the Palestinian Americans in a variety of social classes, and this, together with the nature of their work, also affects their attitude towards a number of aspects of the Palestinian question. Concerning a military solution, the academics are those who least tend to support it thoroughly. There are supporters with reservations and opponents. Academic respondents completely supported the military solution by 20.0 per cent, 42.1 per cent with reservations, and 37.6 per cent rejected it. In their slight support of the military solution, the academics are followed by the businessmen of whom only 38.2 per cent are in favour of it. The strongest support for a military solution came from the workers (67.9 per cent), followed by students who may be described as "radical" (48.4 per cent) and businessmen (38.2 per cent). Workers employed in private enterprise emerged as the group most cautious in their attitude towards a military solution: 39.9 per cent of them were in favour, a further 26.9 per cent supported it with reservations, 15.9 per cent rejected it altogether and 17.3 per cent said they had "no idea".

A second element to be taken into account when defining an individual's social class is his income. Since the Palestinian community in the US is spread across a broad professional spectrum, it is also characterized by substantial differences in income among its members, many of whom live on the welfare state while a considerable number are millionaires. Results of the survey revealed that in general the higher the income-bracket of a Palestinian American, the less likely he is to support a military solution to the Palestinian problem. 51.2 per cent of those respondents with an annual income of under \$20,000, were in favour of a military solution, while only 26.3 per cent of those whose income exceeded \$50,000 per annum opted for this approach. Owing to the fact that the US Palestinian community is of considerable financial importance, donations to the various factions of the Palestinian revolution form the backbone of their political activity. This is particularly true



during periods of political and military PLO expansion and at times when the organization is exposed to military raids.

The Israeli aggression in Lebanon in 1982, the departure of the PLO from Beirut, and the subsequent schism in PLO ranks dismayed many Palestinian Americans who stopped donating with the same degree of generosity. In addition to reflecting their political despondency, their action was indicative of the close ties persisting between US Palestinians and their brothers in the Arab world, and the absence of total assimilation into the host country. Fundraising is the clearest and most important expression of a Palestinian American's political activism. This adds another role to the businessmen of high income which is donation. A degree of mutual understanding exists among the supporters of the various Palestinian organizations in the US, and the most significant yardstick against which to measure the power of any organization is the amount of money it can raise annually from among the members of the Palestinian community. It is customary, at the conclusion of Palestinian meetings or social gatherings, to elect a committee to supervise fundraising. Such committees are usually made up of individuals from the higher-income brackets who will themselves make substantial donations, and will gain prestige in the community because of their new position.

In addition to these social factors which, as has been shown, exert a considerable influence in defining the Palestinian Americans' stand with respect to a military solution to the Palestinian problem, there are two further elements that merit detailed comment: religion and the ballot-box. Earlier quoted statistics have shown that a Palestinian American's religion is closely-related to his stand regarding a military solution. Muslim supporters of this option outnumbered Christian adherents by 2 to 1 (48.4 per cent to 23.8 per cent) and the percentage in each group of those rejecting the military approach was approximately the same (17.8 per cent of Muslims and 16.7 per cent of Christians). The sizeable proportion of Christian respondents who said they had "no idea" is probably due to the fact that they were more Americanized and hence the "Palestine-bond" in them tends to be weaker than in their Muslim counterparts. Discussion of this fact in greater depth made it very clear that there is a definite link between a respondent's strength of religious feeling and his attitude towards a military solution to the Palestinian question. Of all those who are religious observers, 40.8 per cent are in favour of a military solution and 19.4 per cent reject it; for non-observers, the equivalent figures are 45.6 per cent in favour and 16.2 per cent against. The majority of Palestinian Americans who said they had "no idea" came from the group of non-observers. The element of Americanization of those questioned is undoubtedly linked to the strength of their religious feeling, and, in turn, to their attitude towards a military solution. This statement is borne out by the fact that the survey revealed that respondents who said they "occasionally" attended places of worship and who were less Americanized, expressed greater support for a military solution than either those who "always" attended or those who "never" attended.

The second factor associated with their assimilation into American society is the respondents' participation in US elections. The less assimilated who do not choose to vote are the staunchest supporters of a military solution. The survey revealed, nevertheless, that 32.5 per cent of this group tend to prefer the Democratic Party and 20 per cent the Republicans. Palestinian Americans who actively support the Republican Party (traditionally the party of the wealthier classes) expressed the strongest resistance to a military solution of the Middle East conflict. Respondents who do vote fall into two categories: those who go to the ballot box from loyalty either to their party or to the US as a whole and who feel it their duty to participate in elections; and those who vote in an attempt to influence US policy and gain greater support for the Palestinian cause. Irrespective of the differing attitudes of those who support the Democrats and those who support the Republicans, the truth of the matter remains that the less the Palestinian American is involved in US politics, the more inclined he is to favour a military solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Most Palestinian Americans (and indeed Palestinians in general wherever they live) perceive US policy towards the Middle East as detrimental to the Palestinians, in that its support for Israel contributes to the continued denial of Palestinian rights.

How - and even whether - to go about influencing US policy so as to make it more pro-Arab, is an extremely controversial issue among Palestinians. Predictably, the more respondents believed in the possibility of diminishing US backing for Israel, the less inclined they were to favour a military solution, and the more they opted for a political approach. Of those who were convinced that it was possible to cut back US support for Israel, only 13.5 per cent expressed a preference for a military solution; while this approach had the support of 20.8 per cent of those who thought it likely that the US could be influenced in that direction. 53.7 per cent of respondents who had no faith that American policy would change opted for a military solution, as against 16.1 per cent who rejected it.

48.9 per cent of the supporters of USSR were in favour of the military solution to the problem, while 33.8 per cent of those who supported the USSR with reservations had the same attitude towards the military solution. It is peculiar that 53.3 per cent of those who are indifferent towards the USSR supported the military solution.

The confusion implicit in these results stems from three facts. First, that many of those who support a military solution reject any form of political approach, including that of Soviet participation (with proposals based on Brezhnev's Middle East Peace Plan and the USSR's repeated call for an international conference). Secondly, a great number of Palestinian Americans are influenced by US anti-Soviet propaganda which rejects the notion of participation by the Soviet Union in the peace process. Lastly, a considerable proportion of those supporting a military solution are believers in Islam and as such are against any kind of relations with the Soviet Union on religious grounds. This latter attitude is based purely on religious conviction and reflects no political logic. Often these same respondents reject both Zionism and Communism and their ultimate stand is not only anti-Israeli but also anti-Soviet.

In relating the Palestinian American's degree of assimilation into US society to his attitude towards a political approach to the Middle East conflict, it emerged that the respondents' knowledge of the Arabic language is a significant factor. Of those with no knowledge whatsoever of Arabic, 62.4 per cent said they had "no idea" regarding a political approach, and only 18.8 per cent expressed any support for the idea. It should be noted that the high proportion of non-Arabic speakers with "no idea" about a political approach corresponds very closely to the percentage from the same group who had "no idea" about a military solution. The survey showed that the more a Palestinian American uses English, the more likely he is to support a political approach. Of those who expressed a definite preference for this option, 6.4 per cent always speak Arabic, 11.8 per cent use both English and Arabic, and 16.6 per cent speak only English. 83.4 per cent of those who use English had "no idea".

Consideration was given to the choice of friends as a sign of the degree of assimilation and its relation to the respondents' attitude towards a political approach. Those with Arab friends voiced the strongest objection to the idea of a political solution (55.0 per cent); 17.6 per cent of those who preferred American friends were least inclined to reject it, and 58.8 per cent had "no idea".

A related subject to which attention was also given was the way in which Palestinian Americans choose to bring up their children. 28.4 per cent of those respondents who preferred to rear their children along American lines were against the notion of a political approach to the Palestinian problem, and 52.2 per cent of this group had "no idea". Of those who opted to bring up their offspring in the Arab tradition, 47.7 per cent rejected a political approach and only 8.8 per cent supported it.

It was also found that 54.2 per cent of the Palestinian Americans questioned who are against a political approach, keep abreast of events in their homeland, while only 30.6 per cent of those who follow the news "occasionally" are against; 8.3 per cent of respondents who do not follow events at home at all are against, and 83.3 per cent have "no idea".

One of the most revealing factors in a Palestinian American's political make-up is his attitude towards his new country (the US) and the extent of his desire to return to his homeland should the possibility arise. Fifteen per cent of all respondents expressed a preference for remaining in the States (of whom 20 per cent reject a



political solution) and 7.2 per cent have a definite wish to return, 51.3 per cent of them rejecting a political solution.

Most of the Palestinians and other Arabs consider their presence in the US temporary, although, in most cases, it persists for ever. Taken as a whole, it can be said that the more Americanized the Palestinian American proves to be, the more he is inclined to favour a political approach, and when he has become almost completely assimilated his interest in the matter declines and he falls into the category of "no idea".

#### The Palestinian Americans and Palestinian State

After the 1948 war and the founding of the State of Israel, all Palestinians came to realize that their rights had been lost. As time passed, however, they began to disagree on how to define these rights and how to set about having them restored. The demand for a Palestinian state - even any mention of it - had been enveloped in oblivion since 1947 when the United Nations had passed the Resolution on the Partition of Palestine and the establishment of two independent states, a Jewish State (Israel) and an Arab state. The latter never saw the light of day due to a number of local and international factors which have no place in this study. This oblivion continued until the middle of the seventies when the Palestinian resistance movement crystallized its demand for an independent Palestinian state. The period between 1947 and the mid-seventies was a time of torpor within the Palestinian people's movement, with the exception of a number of brief intervals when Palestinian demands emerged sporadically, sometimes through certain leftist and nationalist political factions which recruited many Palestinians living in Arab countries.

During this period, the vast majority of Palestinians, represented by the Arab National Movement, demanded the right to return to their homeland and the annihilation of the "fictitious Zionist entity". This attitude persisted until the demand for an independent Palestinian state was clearly defined. The new demand was reiterated at successive sessions of the Palestine National Council, notably the 16th in 1983 in Algeria. Nevertheless this demand has remained a subject of controversy even among those who have voted in its favour. Some radical organizations believe in the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the entire area of historical Palestine - which implies the elimination of the State of Israel. The initial proposal of Fatah, the largest Palestinian Organization was that of a secular democratic state on the entire land of Palestine, where Muslims, Christians and Jews alike would enjoy equal rights, but this notion has disappeared over the last few years to be replaced by the call for a Palestinian state on any liberated portion of Palestine. This slogan is sometimes interpreted in a number of different ways, including that of a confederated union with Jordan.

Palestinian Americans, like the rest of their compatriots, reflect a number of differing views and stands towards both the question of Palestinian rights and the nature of a Palestinian state. In this section, a review is conducted of Palestinian Americans' attitude towards the boundaries of the Palestinian state and the existence of the State of Israel. These two issues have been at the core of vigorous disputes both within the PLO leadership and among the Palestinian people as a whole.

The vast majority of Palestinian Americans favour a demand for the entire area of historical Palestine - that is, the land on which the State of Israel was founded as well as the Occupied Territories (with the exception of the Golan Heights). 69.3 per cent of all respondents claim the entire area of Palestine, while 17.7 per cent believe that the West Bank and Gaza Strip would be sufficient and only 8.9 per cent answered that they would be prepared to accept a Palestinian state on any portion of land evacuated by the Israelis. This result is in line with the number of those (31.1 per cent) who agree that the present immobility of the Palestinian question can be unblocked by the exchange of recognition between the Palestinians and the Israelis. In reply to a follow-up question about their attitude towards the State of Israel, only 3.7

per cent said they were fully prepared to accept its existence, and almost one-quarter of the number qualified their acceptance. In the author's view, this is a relatively high percentage compared with the attitudes of Palestinians just a few years ago. Those respondents ready to accept the state of Israel with reservations made acceptance contingent on Israel's withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967 and its recognition of the Palestinian people's right to their self-determination. The fact remains, however, that 68.5 per cent of respondents expressed their outright opposition to the existence of the State of Israel. This percentage taken from respondents in the United States, is presumably lower than the equivalent percentage would be of those who live outside America. The difference can be attributed to the nature of the American life-style, the nature of the respondents as individuals and as an American-Palestinian community, not forgetting the crucial pro-Israeli stand of the American mass media, all of which, taken together, contribute to the "acceptability" of the State of Israel. It should also be pointed out at this stage that some of those questioned who expressed their rejection of the existence of Israel said that their attitude would remain unchanged as long as Israel shows no signs of political flexibility.

An attempt was made to find out exactly where the political sympathies of Palestinian Americans lie and how this affects their views on the boundaries of the Palestinian state and the existence of the State of Israel. It emerged that 20.4 per cent of respondents claiming the entire land of historical Palestine were supporters of Fatah, the organization led by Yasser Arafat, while a further 35.8 per cent backed the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine under the leadership of George Habash and 18.2 per cent supported certain Islamic religious movements. Of the Arafat supporters, 45.8 per cent claimed the West Bank and Gaza Strip and 54.2 per cent any part of Palestine. It was discovered, however, that this group lacked homogeneity on the majority of issues covered by the survey, whereas pro-leftist Habash-supporters and those respondents who backed the various Islamic movements (particularly those who sympathized with the Muslim Brotherhood) showed a much greater degree of likemindedness.

Palestinian women in the US tend to be more "moderate" than men in their views concerning the boundaries of the Palestinian state. They are also less specific in their demands. The most rational explanation for this is the traditional social position of Arab women which dictates that they are not to interfere in matters which are "not their concern". Politics, in all its detail, it is assumed, is a subject which is "not the concern" of Arab women. Hence, while 70.4 per cent of all male respondents demanded the entire area of Palestine, the equivalent percentage among women was 64.7 per cent. Likewise on the question of boundaries, while only 2.5 per cent of men said that they had "no opinion", among women the figure was 8.5 per cent.

Young people in general emerged as more demanding than their elders. The majority of Palestinians in the United States are not old, being either new immigrants or actually born in America. 74.5 per cent of respondents under the age of 40 claimed the entire land of historical Palestine, while the equivalent percentage for the over-40s was 48.1 per cent. Many of the latter group expressed the wish to see a Palestinian state established either on the West Bank and Gaza Strip (30.8 per cent) or on any portion of historical Palestine (17.3 per cent).

The survey also revealed that of the Palestinian Americans questioned, those most likely to demand all of historical Palestine were born in Lebanon. At the time of writing, no Palestinian born in Lebanon - or anywhere else outside historical Palestine - could possibly be over the age of 38. In fact 100 per cent of the Lebanese-born Palestinian respondents agreed on the need to recover the entire area of historical Palestine. The group of whom fewest demanded all of historical Palestine was the American-born. It is interesting to note that of this latter group many adopted a very simplistic approach to the problem, apparently unaware of the many factors involved and the fact that the parties concerned have for years been waging a bitter struggle over the issue: "Of course all of Palestine belongs to the Palestinians", some answered, "Who else could it belong to?". Moreover the fact that half of US-born Palestinians claimed all of historical Palestine does not mean that the other half had any feasible alternatives for a resolution of the problem. Some had no opinion whatsoever and in

fact were totally ignorant of the existence of a Palestinian problem. Despite the fact that the Palestinian Americans who were born within the borders of historical Palestine were the most confused in their views, generally speaking they were more in favour of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It is conceivable that the situation in the Occupied Territories since 1967 has made them more realistic than other groups. Palestinians born outside historical Palestine ascribed this realism to either the "selfishness" or "defeatism" of the population of the Occupied Territories.

Palestinians from refugee camps inside historical Palestine or in neighbouring Arab countries, who had joined the American-Palestinian community later, were much more insistent in their demand for the entire area of the land of historical Palestine than those who were born in towns or villages (respectively, 83.3 per cent, 70.8 per cent and 71.2 per cent). Undoubtedly, the inhabitants of refugee camps have suffered most at the hands of the Israeli occupiers and in addition they have not only lost their homeland, but their very homes as well. Their deteriorating political, social, and economic circumstances over the last 40 years of "temporary" dispersal, coupled with an ever-present awareness that they are the owners of the soil on which the State of Israel exists today, makes recovery of the land not only a matter of self-interest but a categorical imperative. The proximity of opinion between the immigrants from the towns and those from the villages is explicable by the generally rural nature of Palestinian towns and the fact that, in any event, most urban inhabitants were village-born and later moved to the towns. It is important to note that despite the high proportion of refugee respondents who claimed the entire area of historical Palestine, the remainder did not opt for a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Contrary to expectation, they answered that they would settle for a state on any portion of Palestinian soil. Former refugee camp inhabitants can thus be split into two distinct groups: those who are all-demanding and those ready to accept anything, one group rejecting any solution which does not guarantee all their historical rights and the other which seems anxious to put an end to the problem regardless of the price.

The assertion that a Palestinian American's place of birth influences his attitude towards the boundaries of the state he demands, leads logically to the assumption that his place of residence - prior to his immigration to the US - may also affect his views. It emerged, in fact, that those Palestinians who had lived in the Gulf States or Jordan before moving to the US made up the highest proportion of those ready to accept any part of Palestine at all (15.8 per cent for the Gulf States and 13.8 per cent for Jordan). This might be taken as implying that their social and political circumstances in those countries have made them the least revolutionary in their demands and aspirations, leaving them profoundly anxious to resolve their situation in whatever way and at whatever price. Looking at the other side of the coin, it was found that with the exception of those respondents born in the US, the Palestinians who had lived for some time in Lebanon were those least inclined to settle for just any portion of Palestine, and most likely to demand the entire historical land of Palestine.

Education plays an important role in defining political attitudes. This is especially true of the population of Third World countries, but also applies to a considerable extent to the Palestinian community in America which comprises a broad range of educational levels from total illiteracy to holders of PhDs. Graduate Palestinian Americans registered the lowest percentage of demands for the entire historical land of Palestine, while results on the same subject from people with other levels of education were mixed. Graduates seemed to favour the concept of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 60.7 per cent of them opting for this solution, and none at all saying that they had "no opinion" on the subject. It is assumed that these respondents have not only a patriotic, but also a professional interest in the Palestinian cause. The majority of those ready to accept any solution at all, or any portion of Palestine, were among the group of illiterates who failed to imagine any feasible solution to the Palestinian problem. Most of this group were either elderly or women who merely seek to put an end to the matter without any serious thought of gain. The 13.9 per cent of graduate respondents who were ready to accept any portion of historical Palestine have a different reason for their choice: the



belief that the Arabs and the Palestinians are in too weak a position to make specific demands.

Since university graduates were the group least inclined to demand all of Palestine, it can be inferred that Palestinian academics in the US will have similar views. Businessmen demonstrated a parallel tendency, but their reasons for doing so were not the same. The university-educated looked at the issue in terms of Arab/US/Israeli capabilities; the businessmen have interests which are not affected greatly by the territory that a Palestinian state would be established on. Students and workers were the most vigorous in demanding all of historical Palestine. It is interesting to note that with the exception of the academics and labourers, every group had its percentage of respondents who answered "no idea" on this subject: the academics because they all had an opinion to express, and the labourers because they tend to be the least Americanized of all and are therefore most concerned to find a solution to the problems of their homeland. The academics have awareness enough to the extent that they ought to have an opinion.

In approaching the relationship between a respondent's income and his attitude to the issue of boundaries, it emerged that, in general, the higher the income, the less likely those questioned were to demand all of historical Palestine. 72.9 per cent of respondents with an income under \$20,000 a year claimed all of historical Palestine, as did 44 per cent of those who earned over \$50,000 a year, while 27.8 per cent of this latter group responded "no idea". Some of those who demand any part of historical Palestine consider themselves to be practising the policy of take what is offered and demand more; but I doubt whether these people are following the same tactic, since any solution of the problem will have a greater effect on the lower income-bracket than on their higher income counterparts.

It was stated earlier that the significance and implications of religion in our homeland and in other Arab countries are unlike its impact in many other parts of the world. In the former, religion highlights the relationship between man and God and is usually taken to refute other dogma, particularly Marxism and nationalism. In the United States, however, religion reinforces nationalist feeling. This affects Islam more than Christianity. The mosque, the Islamic place of worship, which functions only as a place of prayer in the Arab and Islamic countries is usually the best place for young Muslims in the States to learn the Arabic language and to assemble to celebrate their festivals. The link between Islam and Arab nationalism in America, and the fact that Islam is a minority religion there, makes it more of a revolutionary faith in the US than it is in Arab and Eastern countries. 72.1 per cent of Muslim Palestinian Americans claimed all of historical Palestine, as compared with 54.8 per cent of Christian Palestinian Americans, while more of the latter (24.1 per cent) claimed the West Bank and Gaza Strip than the former (16.8 per cent). This does not necessarily imply greater apathy among Christian Palestinian Americans towards their homeland. 7.1 per cent of the Christians and 9.3 per cent of the Muslims were ready to opt for any portion of Palestinian land. It should be borne in mind that the point of reference used was the traditional religion of the respondents' families rather than the individual devoutness of those questioned.

In subsequent more detailed discussion of the respondents' personal beliefs, dividing them up into Muslims, Christians and non-believers, it was found that 74.5 per cent of Muslims claimed all of historical Palestine, as opposed to 65.3 per cent of non-believers and 48.6 per cent of Christians. The majority of those who replied "no idea" (18.4 per cent) were Americanized Christians, followed by Americanized non-believers; but 100 per cent of those Muslims questioned defined the boundaries of the area they claimed, even when they differed as to its dimensions. Muslims have a strong commitment to their land and, for the majority of them, particularly those who are active in one of the Islamic religious movements, Palestine is part of the Islamic world rather than a Palestinian homeland. The differences between the views of the devout and the non-practising Muslims and Christians were not significant on this point, although each group opted for different ways in which to achieve the state whose boundaries they were defining. It was noted that the devout - of whatever



faith - displayed a greater tendency to demand any portion of historical Palestine, revealing their desire for a quick and easy solution, regardless of the gain.

Those US Palestinians who believed in a political approach did not claim all of historical Palestine and this reflects their awareness of the limited military capability of the Arab countries. It is a rationale of the military possibilities rather than a real preference for a political solution that underlies their choice. In the logic of traditional power politics, it is the failure of a political solution which leads to a resort to military force; but in the special circumstances of the Palestinian problem, it is the realization that no military solution is possible, which precedes a resort to a political approach. Of all those Palestinian Americans interviewed, 7.1 per cent urged a political solution, 26.1 per cent opted for a political solution albeit with reservations, and 58.2 per cent rejected it altogether.

It is perhaps worth noting that those who answered "no idea" to the question on the boundaries of a future Palestinian state, made the same response when asked about a political approach. This would seem to reveal the existence of a group of people with little or no idea about, or indeed knowledge of, the Palestinian issue as a whole.

Further consideration of the relationship between a Palestinian's assimilation into American society and his preferred method of resolving the Palestinian question, showed that the weaker his knowledge of the Arabic language the less he demanded the entire land of historical Palestine. Conversely, those with a better knowledge of Arabic were more strongly nationalist and tended to demand all of historical Palestine. An attempt to determine the correlation between the language habitually used by the respondents and their attitude towards the issue of Palestinian boundaries, prompted the conclusion that those who used Arabic were more eager to claim all of historical Palestine or a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, while of those who used English only, 75 per cent answered "no idea". None of this group chose to answer "no, any portion of Palestine", presumably because defence of such a response requires a greater understanding than they have of the Palestinian cause. Advocates of this view are renouncing all their rights because they feel themselves to be in a position of weakness.

Efforts to determine whether the way in which a Palestinian American chooses to rear his children is related to his attitude towards the boundaries of a Palestinian state, showed that those who bring up their children in the American style least demanded all of historical Palestine or the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Half of this group answered "no idea". Those who expressed no preference for either the American or the Arab method of child-rearing (considering the former unsatisfactory and the latter old-fashioned) made the same response, on the issue of boundaries, as those in favour of the Arab system - both demanding all of historical Palestine. Most of this group were well-educated people who said that they did not want to be American; they wanted to be Arab, but in a new way.

Consideration of the relationship between the nationality of a respondent's friends and the issue of boundaries, revealed that those with a tendency to choose American friends, were less inclined to be specific in their demands regarding a Palestinian State. This group displayed no understanding of the major component issues of the Palestinian question or of Palestinian demands. Respondents who did not choose to keep abreast of events in Palestine were the least inclined to demand all of historical Palestine or the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and in fact three quarters of them answered "no idea". On the other hand, those Palestinians questioned who were anxious to follow news of their homeland either through the media or via contact with other Palestinians or Arabs, were very specific in their response to the issue of boundaries and none of them said they had "no idea".

The length of time a Palestinian has spent in the US has a considerable effect on his degree of Americanization. If the individual is elderly, he is unlikely to be greatly affected by the new culture, and the less time he has spent in the US the more land he is likely to claim. This can be attributed to the fact that he is less assimilated and, in such cases, usually a young person.

The question of whether or not a Palestinian American wishes to return to his homeland also seems to affect his attitude to the boundaries of a Palestinian state.

There is a considerable gap between the answers given by those determined to return and those whose eagerness was less apparent. 75 per cent of those wishing to leave the US to live in a Palestinian state, claimed for this state the entire area of historical Palestine, while less than one-third of those reluctant to leave demanded the same area. Those who were determined to return also showed greater enthusiasm in claiming the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Most of those unwilling to leave the US had "no idea" about the boundaries a Palestinian state should have, a natural response in view of their greater degree of Americanization and their lesser interest in the issue in general. It is remarkable that the majority of those respondents who were uncertain about whether or not they would return, claimed the land in its entirety. This would seem to imply that their indecision is a product of their realistic and conservative outlook, rather than a lack of nationalist feeling or any firm desire to settle in the US.

Taking together all the criteria used: degree of assimilation, knowledge of Arabic, the language spoken with friends, the nationality of friends, method of child-rearing, interest in Palestinian news, length of time spent in the US and the individual's desire to return to a homeland, it at once becomes apparent that the more Americanized the Palestinian American is, the less concerned he is about the Palestinian question and the more ignorance he displays of the entire issue.

#### Attitude Towards the State of Israel

Although the attitude towards the State of Israel is logically the other side of the coin of the issue of boundaries for a Palestinian state, answers to this question about claims for all of historical Palestine, a portion of it, or the West Bank and Gaza Strip, were straightforward, but attitudes towards the existence of the State of Israel were decidedly ambiguous. Acceptance of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip would seem to imply acceptance of a State of Israel on the remainder of historical Palestine, but this did not necessarily prove true for all respondents. The State of Israel was founded in 1948 on a major portion of the land of Palestine, after many Palestinians had fled into the remaining areas, or into neighbouring Arab countries. Those who were to become Palestinian refugees in no way believed that they were leaving their towns and villages for ever - although this has in fact proved to be the case. Until quite recently, most Palestinians rejected the existence of the State of Israel on their land, believing that it would not survive. All Palestinians are convinced of their right to Palestine, despite differences in their demands and opinions, brought about by their varied understanding of "what might be possible". Before 1967, Palestinians opposed the State of Israel because it had stolen their land; now, in addition, it is their constant oppressor. Israel is no longer the historical enemy, it is the everyday enemy of one and a half million Palestinians; no longer an old nightmare, but one that haunts every minute of their waking lives. Palestinians used to fight Israel because it had plundered their dreams; today they fight because it is plundering their lives.

The research on which this study is based showed just how difficult it is for Palestinians to accept the existence of the State of Israel. A mere 3.7 per cent of all respondents were prepared to accept the State of Israel without reservations; 23 per cent accepted it with reservations; 68.5 per cent rejected it outright and 4.8 per cent had "no idea" how they felt. Of those who are non-Arabic speakers, and who are virtually Americanized, 44 per cent were willing to accept the State of Israel. Those willing to accept the State of Israel with reservations are scattered throughout all the groups regardless of their mastery of the Arabic language. It is clear however that the more a Palestinian American uses Arabic, the more reluctant he is to accept the existence of the State of Israel. All respondents who use only English were ready to accept the State of Israel (with or without reservations). 60 per cent of those who accepted Israel without reservations used only English, 30 per cent used both English and Arabic and ten per cent used only Arabic. Of those who rejected the existence of the State of Israel, 61.4 per cent used only Arabic, 38.6 per cent both English and Arabic and none at all spoke only English.

Similar results emerged from a study of the link between a respondent's attitude towards Israel and the nationality of his friends. Those respondents who had, for the most part, Arab friends (slightly Americanized) tended to reject the existence of the State of Israel; while of those who opted for American friends, a sizeable proportion accepted it (35.3 per cent). Many people from this latter group, however, gave the answer "no idea". The conclusion that the Palestinian American's degree of Americanization is inversely proportional to their ignorance of, and indifference towards, their homeland, is further borne out by the fact that the limited number of respondents with a preference for Arab friends who were prepared to accept the existence of the State of Israel did so only with reservations. Of those whose circle of friends was principally American only 2.2 per cent rejected Israel, as compared with 55.2 per cent of those whose friends were Arab, and 41.3 per cent of those with both Arab and American friends. Likewise, respondents who expressed a preference for the American style of child-rearing showed a greater inclination to accept the existence of the State of Israel. Only 30 per cent of them rejected it while 73.9 per cent of those who opted for the Arab way of bringing up children felt this way. It was further discovered that individuals who were interested in following political and social events in Israel and the Occupied Territories were more likely to reject the existence of the State of Israel than those who did not keep abreast of the news. Approximately half of this latter group were ready to accept the State of Israel without any reservations whatsoever.

Ignorance of current events in the historical area of Palestine, however, does not necessarily mean that a respondent was indifferent to the situation. Sometimes the reason lies in insufficient media coverage, or the person's lack of free time to spend on the subject. In the case of factory workers, this latter factor is due to the long hours spent on the job and the very tiring nature of the work itself. 74.9 per cent of those who rejected the existence of the State of Israel, regularly followed Palestinian news, 24 per cent of them sometimes followed it and 1.5 per cent expressed total disinterest in the matter. The less involved the respondent is in the Palestinian issue, the more willing he is to accept the existence of the State of Israel.

Palestinian Americans' stated intentions whether or not to leave the US in the event of their being offered the chance to return to a Palestinian homeland, are also related to their acceptance or rejection of the State of Israel. 81 per cent of those who rejected the State of Israel were determined to return, 9.8 per cent planned to remain in the US permanently and 9.2 per cent were unsure of their future plans ("no idea"). It was also found that the longer a Palestinian American spends in the US, the more inclined he is to accept the State of Israel. Furthermore, these people were much more likely to afford Israel the same unquestioning recognition they will give to any other country in the world. This growing acceptance among long-stay Palestinian Americans has two underlying causes: first, the person in question is no longer suffering directly from Israel, and secondly, US sympathy and assistance to the State of Israel.

Religion also influences the Palestinian's attitude towards Israel. Religion not only has a special significance by reason of its important place in Palestinian society, it is also a good indication of a Palestinian's degree of assimilation into American society. Other studies have revealed that Christians, in addition to being the first Palestinian immigrants, are also those most quickly assimilated into the new society. This study revealed that Christians far outnumber Muslims in their acceptance of the State of Israel. Only 45.2 per cent of Christians rejected its existence, while among Muslim respondents the figure was 72.9 per cent. Almost the same number of Muslims as Christians answered "no idea" and it was found that the majority of this group were either born in the US or taken there when they were very small. It was clear that their American background exercised a much greater influence on them than either Islam or Christianity. When the survey focused on personal belief (as opposed to traditional family religion), it emerged that those most willing to accept the existence of the State of Israel were self-confessed Christians, followed by avowed Muslims and then by non-believers.

Attempts to evaluate other factors relevant to attitudes towards the State of Israel disclosed that 35 per cent of those actually born in the US expressed unqualified



acceptance of the State of Israel, 40 per cent accepted it with reservations and fifteen per cent replied "no idea". It is worth noting that respondents born in Lebanon, all - without exception - rejected the existence of the State of Israel, a fact possibly associated with the social and political circumstances of Palestinians living in Lebanon. 91.7 per cent of respondents from refugee camps rejected the State of Israel, as did 69.7 per cent of those born in villages and 69.4 per cent of the urban-born.

#### US Palestinians and Jerusalem

The most controversial issue encountered in addressing the socio-political attitudes of Palestinians, whether in the US or elsewhere, is their attitude towards the status of Jerusalem.

According to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 of 11th December 1948, (and indeed the earlier Partition Resolution 181 (II) of 29th November 1947), Jerusalem was to become international. The fact that this Resolution was not implemented led to the division of the City into two parts, the larger of them falling within the boundaries of the State of Israel. This was declared the capital of Israel, while the Old City, under Arab control, was later annexed, along with the West Bank, to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

After the 1967 war, Israel reunited the two parts by herself annexing the Old City of East Jerusalem. The status of Jerusalem is fundamental to the Zionist movement as a whole, and is a crucial issue among Orthodox Jews. But Jerusalem is also a city of supreme importance to all Arabs, and to Palestinians in particular, because it contains so many places sacred to Islam, and Christians also have a great number of holy places there. For non-religious Arabs, Jerusalem is a historical city, a symbol of Islam and Arab nationalism throughout the years. Its importance for Jews, Muslims and Christians alike makes it extremely difficult for any of the three groups to renounce it and for this reason it has become the major obstacle to all attempts to resolve the Palestinian question.

A mere 7.4 per cent of those Palestinian Americans questioned were willing to give up Jerusalem if, by so doing, the resolution of the Palestinian problem could be brought nearer. 88.5 per cent were adamant in their refusal and 4.1 per cent replied "no idea". Irrespective of age, sex, income or social or academic status, the vast majority of all respondents rejected the notion of relinquishing Jerusalem, and this held good whether they were pro-US or pro-Soviet, pro-PLO or anti-PLO regardless of their political commitment.

Three results deserve particular mention:

- Not one of the Christian Palestinians questioned was ready to give up Jerusalem;
- Not one of those over the age of 60 was prepared to relinquish the City;
- Of those who answered "no idea", most had either been born in the US or were women who displayed ignorance of both politics and culture.

Palestinians' refusal to relinquish Jerusalem is based not only on religious and cultural grounds, but on historical and nationalist ones too.

#### Palestinian Americans and the Religious Solution of the Palestinian Issue

With the increasing complexity of the Palestinian problem and the defeat of the Arabs, opinions on how best to resolve the issue became diversified, and two opposing solutions emerged - the Religious Solution and the Marxist Solution. Recently these two solutions have begun polarizing Palestinians to a noticeable degree.

The seventies witnessed the rise of Muslim fundamentalism in many Arab and Islamic countries, the underlying reasons for which were varied. The defeat of Arab forces in June 1967, led to a realization of the weaknesses inherent in the existing Arab political systems and their inability to resolve the problems confronting the Arab nations. People began to look into the past in an attempt to rediscover the Golden Age of Arab history, and they found that it coincided with the rise of Islam. This feeling



was reinforced by the success of the Islamic revolution in toppling the Shah of Iran and grew with the support of Islamic movements by conservative Arab countries.

Since Islamic fundamentalism and political Islam has spread throughout the US Palestinian community, it was judged necessary to give some attention to attitudes concerning the Religious Solution to the Palestinian problem and the impact of a number of related social factors.

Islamic fundamentalists believe that the Middle East conflict is basically a clash between Muslims and Jews. Palestine, they argue, belongs to Islam and should be returned to its Muslim owners, and the only possible way of achieving this is by means of a Jihad (holy war) leading to the establishment of an Islamic state. Attainment of this goal is feasible only if all Muslims unite in returning to their true faith.

17.2 per cent of respondents were strongly in favour of a religious solution to the Palestinian problem, 20.5 per cent approved of it but with reservations, while 36.9 per cent rejected it outright. The 25.4 per cent who replied "no idea" (a substantial number) had difficulty in proposing an alternative to the religious solution. Regardless of how representative our sample is, it nevertheless indicates the existence of a considerable number of Palestinian Americans who stand convinced of the necessity and the feasibility of a religious solution.

It emerged that not all those in favour of a religious solution are religious, but they do consider Islam as the proper answer to Judaism which they view as being directly responsible for the establishment of the State of Israel. It was found that the intensity of Jewish commitment to Israel, in some areas of the United States, such as New York, has generated an equal and opposing Islamic commitment among the Palestinian community.

Although women are usually more religious than men, male respondents tended to favour a religious solution more than women. This can perhaps be attributed to the fact that men participate more in the politics of religion and have a stronger commitment to Islamic movements related to the Palestinian question. The refusal of some fundamentalist women to answer the questionnaire increased the relative proportion of males in this section of the survey.

A link emerged between the respondent's age and religious devoutness and their attitude towards a religious solution. Those most inclined to opt for a religious solution are the very young and the elderly, but a marked preference for it begins to make itself felt in respondents over 50. This viewpoint in the elderly is understandable, but it is difficult to explain its prevalence among the young. It is perhaps due in part to political frustration which makes them easily influenced by religious movements.

The place of birth of a Palestinian American has an effect on his views on this aspect of the Palestinian issue. Half of those born in historical Palestine accepted the idea of a religious solution (some with and some without reservations) as compared with two-thirds of those born in Jordan. This is undoubtedly due to their strict religious upbringing and the influence of a number of religious movements in Jordan. Those respondents born in Lebanon were most vehement in their rejection of a religious solution, while 50 per cent of those born in America said that they had "no idea", and none at all expressed a strong preference for this approach. Very few Palestinian Americans were born in the Gulf States, but a number of them lived there for some time before emigrating to the US, and it was this group which demonstrated greatest enthusiasm for a religious solution. Those who had been living in Israel before 1967 were the strongest opponents of a religious solution. Within the group of Palestinians born in the West Bank, Hebronites (traditionally considered very religious) with American citizenship found the idea of a religious solution most interesting, and five times more of them approved than disapproved of it. These are followed by the citizens who are from Nablus of whom only half approved of it.

Taken as a whole, those who rejected the religious solution tended to be the townspeople (who are often less influenced by religion) and then villagers. Refugees who had been living in the camps were extremely supportive of this approach, although they are usually considered more revolutionary and less affected by religion than their counterparts in towns or villagers.

Respective levels of education also colour the Palestinian American view of the appropriateness of a religious solution to the problem. Neither the respondents' job nor the length of time spent in the US however seems to have any appreciable influence on his attitude to this subject. The higher his level of education, the less inclined the respondent was to support a religious solution, while those who were illiterate in general tended to favour this approach. Since there are a great many well-educated people in the Palestinian American community, who tend to be community leaders, and since this group is the one which most rejects a religious solution, it is difficult to popularise this approach. It mainly gains credence through efforts by members of the religious movements.

A relationship was found to exist between a respondent's income and his attitude towards a religious solution, along the same lines as the age-religion link. Those in both the higher-income and the lower-income brackets tended to favour a religious solution, but those in between were less inclined to accept it. The response of low-income Palestinians conforms to logic; what is strange is the attitude of the average-income group. Acceptance of this approach was more whole-hearted among non-practising Muslims and Christians. The latter either rejected it altogether or answered "no idea". It was not clear during the interviews whether the religion on which such a solution was to be based was Christianity or Islam; both of the two religious groups seemed to assume that it would be only Islam because there is no place even to think of a Christian solution to the crisis in the area. It was stated earlier that it is difficult to find acceptance of this religious approach among the non-religious, but we did find acceptance of it among the respondents who described themselves as religious but not strictly so. The young, who are usually not very strict in their religious observance, rejected the religious solution outright, and the elderly, in general, approved it, while the middle-aged seemed undecided.

Devout Muslims who are not interested in politics and not members of religious movements tended to reject the idea of a religious solution or, if they did accept it, did so with reservations. Islamic sects and movements do not always enjoy the confidence of the devout who are therefore unwilling to accept approaches advocated by the movements. An overall tendency to accept the religious solution was perceived among Palestinian Americans in general. Opposing this was the trend among the young and the educated to opt for a Marxist solution. It is difficult to predict which path Palestinians will eventually choose in seeking a resolution of their problem. The future of the moderate stream is not viewed as very promising.

#### US Palestinians and the Palestinian Organizations

Owing to the unique structure of Palestinian society and the fact that the Palestinian community diaspora is scattered throughout the world, a number of organizations have grown up with ideologies ranging from extreme right to extreme left. An attempt was made to evaluate these bodies, and Palestinian support for them in influencing the Palestinians' assimilation into American society. It should be noted that:

(i) The military and political organizations in the US reflect Palestinian bodies in existence outside that country.

(ii) No Palestinian Americans support Palestinian organizations sponsored by Arab regimes. (In every Arab country with a Palestinian community, a specific organization has been established under the control of the government to support its own policies.)

(iii) This lack of support indicates that these organizations are not truly representative of Palestinian views but are imposed on them by the various Arab regimes.

(iv) Palestinian Americans, owing to their absence from the Arab/Palestinian scene and the very generalized information filtered through the media, are often unable to grasp the minute differences between the organizations. They usually support one of three lines: (a) Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the PLO and leader of Fatah, the largest Palestinian party which represents the moderates; (b) George Habash, Chairman of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, representing the left-wing; (c) the

Islamic movements led by the Muslim Brotherhood, which speak for the growing trend towards religious fundamentalism in the Arab world.

(iv) All Palestinian movements, both in the US and elsewhere, are demonstrating a tendency to polarize towards either the Islamic movements or the left, both of which are radical although in opposing directions. The moderate stream which, until recently, was very prominent is now appearing to decline. It is the very complex nature of the Palestinian problem which has driven its people to seek new alternatives.

27.7 per cent of all respondents supported Arafat, 26.5 per cent were pro-Habash and fifteen per cent favoured the Islamic movements. 8.4 per cent said they did not support any of the Palestinian organizations and twelve per cent replied "no idea". The remainder expressed support for one or other of the organizations not mentioned above. Those who gave no support to any of the organizations gave as their reason their distrust of all of them, on the basis of past experience with one or more, in the belief that these organizations have deviated from their original goals and have not yet returned to the right track. Respondents who expressed these views tended to be more knowledgeable about the Palestinian issue, and the various political trends involved, than those who said they had "no idea". It should perhaps be pointed out that "support" for an organization is judged on the basis of agreement with its fundamental political trend, and not necessarily on the grounds of active participation in that organization. It is also worth noting that Palestinian Americans tend to consider themselves "supporters" of a particular organization rather than "members" of it. The political situation of Palestinians in the US is rather uneasy. Their activities are usually conducted in secret owing to America's pro-Israeli bias and policies, and also to intensive Zionist activity in that country. Nevertheless, the Palestinians remain the most highly politicized of all the Arab communities in the United States.

Despite the fact that men in general are more involved in politics than women, it was found that the percentages of males and females supporting the different PLO factions were very close. Women, however, showed a greater tendency than men to answer "no idea". This might best be explained by the high rate of illiteracy among Palestinian women and by the political and cultural isolation which has marked the lives of most women from Third World countries.

The birthplace of Palestinian Americans clearly affects their preference for one or other political organization. Those born in Jordan tended to support the moderate line of Yasser Arafat, while those born in Lebanon were most steadfast in their support of the Palestinian left, represented by George Habash. Support for the Islamic movements came principally from people born in Arab countries neighbouring Palestine, among them Jordan. Of respondents born in America, only a very small percentage favoured the Islamic movements - a logical result, since no one would expect extremely Americanized Palestinians to sympathize with Islamic fundamentalism.

It is curious to note that of those Palestinians born in the US, those who did express a definite political stand favoured Habash (30 per cent) rather than Arafat (10 per cent), while the remainder had "no idea". Palestinians born in historical Palestine were taken as a yardstick for the opinions of all other respondents, and within this group supporters of Arafat predominated, followed by sympathizers with the left, and lastly by those who favoured Islamic movements.

Among the Jordan-born Palestinians, a small ratio supported the left wing, while the majority supported the middle (Arafat) and Islamic movements. This result is due to the weakness of the leftist parties in Jordan and to the fact that the media and the ideology adopted by the regime does not contradict Arafat's ideas, particularly when there was official Palestinian-Jordanian cooperation as there was when this study took place. For the most part, the Jordanian authorities encourage the Islamic movements, and in recent years, the Hashemite Kingdom, like a number of other Arab and Islamic countries, has witnessed an extension of Islamization to many aspects of life. As was shown earlier, Lebanon-born Palestinian Americans tend to disagree on many points with those born in Jordan. The revolutionary situation in Lebanon coupled with the existence of many political splinter groups, and with the weakness of traditional Islamic movements, notably the Muslim Brotherhood, means that the



religious movement which predominates is the Shi'i movement, while the majority of Palestinians there are Sunni, which explains the weakness of their support for the Shi'is.

Respondents born in pre-67 Israel are strongly pro-Arafat, and indeed it is logical that in view of the events that succeeded the founding of the State of Israel, that Palestinians should be loyal to the PLO, which they see as equated to the concept of a Palestinian identity. The Organization is seen as a symbol of their national identity, the champion which will finally put an end to their persecution. Their allegiance to Arafat personally is based on the awareness that he was primarily responsible for the de facto establishment of the PLO. Attention should be drawn to the fact that at the last Israeli elections, all Arab candidates regardless of their ideology, were competing in the loyalty they pledged for Arafat, knowing that he enjoyed by far the greatest support in the Occupied Territories. Moreover, the absence of any other Palestinian faction inside Israel has helped Arafat's name to be the only one known due to its regular mention by the media. Another reason for loyalty to Arafat is the fact that most of the Palestinian Americans who were born (in historical Palestine) before the founding of the state of Israel are now elderly, and having emigrated long before the establishment of the PLO, are only familiar with this organization and are unaware of current political events in their homeland. One fact emerges quite clearly - the less a Palestinian American is knowledgeable about the Palestinian cause, the more likely he is to support Arafat.

Of those questioned who had formerly been resident in the Gulf States, two-thirds supported Islamic movements rather than Habash or Arafat, because in those countries Islamic fundamentalism is the predominant ideology.

The fact that educational standards in developing countries have a considerable impact on the attitudes of the population is equally true of Palestinian Americans. Those who are illiterate are usually not interested in discussing politics. If provoked into such a discussion they tend to side with either Arafat or Islamic ideologies, with little or no support for the left. This is also a well-known fact in Arab countries where leftist ideology is widespread among educated people. Among the group of non-graduates, who make up a large proportion of the Palestinian American labourers, there is a marked decline in the popularity of Islamic ideology, with approximately equal support extended to Habash and Arafat. Preference for Islamic movements appears to increase among under-graduates but declines in graduates. It seems that the relationship between education and the different ideologies is shown more clearly in the difference between educated and uneducated, rather than between the different stages of education.

The income factor also has an important role to play in the area of political ideology. Experience has shown that the higher the Palestinian American's income-bracket, the more likely he is either to be pro-Arafat, or to answer that he has "no idea". The majority of support for the left comes from the middle income-bracket (\$30,000 pa) and declines when the income level rises or falls. There is more support for Islamic movements among low-income workers with no technical skills who earn no more than those employed in restaurants or domestic work. The proportion of people with low or average incomes seems to be increasing rapidly, and those who were approached for the purposes of this survey expressed an increasing preference for Islamic movements and the left, while supporters of Arafat tend to be the wealthy with influence within the Palestinian community. There is also a trend in this latter group towards Islamic movements, and it is recognized that there are few conflicting views between the ideology of the PLO and that of the Islamic fundamentalists, either intellectually or historically. Differences, where they do exist, tend to be in political strategy, but in the US - and elsewhere - it can be observed that the two often unite to oppose a challenge from the left.

Islamic fundamentalism, although it is growing rapidly among Palestinian Americans is nevertheless, still not a widespread popular movement. People remain wary of religious parties. The Muslims follow their faith and their orthodox religion - the ideas of Islam rather than Islam as a political ideology. The majority support Arafat. Any consideration of this subject ought to bear in mind that the survey



revealed that 18.6 per cent of Muslim respondents are pro-Habash, although he is a Marxist and of Christian origin. As Muslims they support him not on the grounds of his Marxism or his Christianity, but because of the principles which his party represents. Religious movements and parties tend to be based on faith, but little or no support for them exists among Christian respondents or non-believers, and so these parties stand little chance of gaining widespread popular support among Palestinian Americans unless there is a far-reaching Islamization there.

It should be stressed once again that the proportion of those with "no idea" about the Palestinian cause increases among the Christian Palestinian Americans with a high degree of assimilation into American society and little awareness of the nationalist cause. Non-religious people - or to be more accurate, those who described themselves as non-religious - are markedly pro-leftist and displayed no support for Islamic movements. Nor is support for Arafat very strong despite Fatah's demand for a secular democratic Palestinian state.

The fact that a person has strong religious beliefs does not mean that he inclines towards the Islamic movements, but that he has a greater tendency towards political religion. Believers tend to give their allegiance to Arafat, with his nationalist religious ideology, and only after that to Islamic movements. This became clear from a study of the relationship between observance of religious occasions and the political direction supported by the respondents. A sizeable proportion of the supporters of the left observe religious occasions. This is because the fact that a person supports a religious movement or Arafat does not clash with other people's opinion of them, whereas if they support the left, the implication is that the person is an atheist. This is still a very sensitive subject among Palestinian Americans. Exceptions, of course, always exist to prove the rule and it was sometimes found that some leftists do have religious beliefs, possibly because after 1982, when the Palestinian resistance movement left Beirut, many Palestinians, whether believers or not, lost their confidence in the old system which had brought about that situation.

A Palestinian American's job influences his political direction and it emerged that support for Arafat was high among academic Palestinians. Many of this group, who play an important role, also believe that they have a major part to play on the Palestinian scene, owing to the impact of American policy in the Middle East. Their feeling may also be caused by the desire of Arab governments to influence America through academic Palestinians in the US.

Many of the labourers are inclined to the left, especially the educated, and there are a great many Palestinians in America who, although educated, can only work as labourers. Most businessmen support the conservative line of the PLO (Arafat). The remainder are divided between the left (Habash) and the Islamic movements. The explanation for the attitude of the pro-leftist businessmen is that anyone running a private enterprise tends to call himself a "businessman" even if the enterprise in question is quite small. The white-collar workers distribute their support throughout the various parties. Most of the Palestinian American students expressed "no idea" on the subject of political line. Many of them hold American nationality and some were born in the US, but the swing towards the left and the Islamic movements is growing among this group.

On the question of assimilation and its influence on political beliefs, it was found that the greater the degree of assimilation, the less the political awareness of the respondents. Americanization is no indication of political inclination, but rather of a person's breadth of knowledge about the Palestinian problem. It was noted that some respondents who said that they did not support any political faction, in fact spoke Arabic very well. This would seem to imply, not a disinterest in the Palestinian cause, but rather a high degree of frustration with the situation and a form of protest.

Furthermore, results also showed that 100 per cent of respondents who spoke only English said that they had "no idea" about political inclination. This does not prove that assimilation goes hand in hand with a pro-rightist trend, rather that the respondents knew nothing about the cause. The use of Arabic coincides with support for Islam, and the strong tie between Islam and the Arabic language makes it logical. Orthodox Muslims consider any departure from the Arabic language to be a departure

from Islam itself. Moreover it emerged that the use of Arabic means support for Arafat, revealing the strong link between Fatah's ideology and that of Islam. Detachment from Arabic and from a total commitment to the language does not only reflect Americanization but in addition an intellectual liberation and an inclination towards the left.

The fact that the three political lines on which this study focused receive the lion's share of Palestinian American support does not imply their rejection of all other lines, but merely that Palestinians in the US do not have sufficient information about other factions to enable them to choose. Some respondents did declare their support for other nationalist and leftist parties, but they were in a minority.

Supporters of Islamic movements in the US Palestinian community tend to be less Americanized because religious restrictions prevent them from mixing socially with other Americans although there are many black Muslims in the States, but for them the nature of Islamic culture is somewhat different.

Consideration of the link between assimilation and child-rearing produced similar results. The majority of Palestinian Americans reject the American way of bringing up children (throughout the full range of respondents from Communists to Muslims). Supporters of the Islamic movements, however, have chosen to bring up their offspring in the traditional Arab way, as do most of the pro-Arafat group. Palestinian Americans on the left of the political spectrum reject the American method but also have certain reservations about the Arabs' conservatism.

Despite the fact that many Palestinian Americans expressed a desire to return to their homeland and said that they consider their residence in America a temporary one, the overall impression they gave was that few would actually leave the United States. Palestinian Americans, for the most part, are free to visit Palestine at any time, but few actually do.

Half of the respondents who said that they would not leave the States, had said they had "no idea" about the issue of a political line. On the other hand, those who expressed a determination to leave had reservations with respect to their support - whether for the PLO, the extreme right or the far left. Leftist supporters suffer national alienation in addition to intellectual and ideological alienation. Many of them live in very poor economic conditions. Supporters of Islamic movements also suffer from ideological alienation, but not from national alienation for religion transcends nationality. Attention should be paid to the attitudes of supporters of Palestinian organizations towards the Palestinian problem and possible solutions. The majority of those who favoured a military solution are left wing, and Muslims also tend to favour this approach, because Islam has commanded the waging of a Jihad (holy war) on behalf of Allah in order to liberate Muslim lands. Most of Arafat's supporters are those who least support a military solution, despite the fact that only four years ago this party was promoting such slogans as "Revolution until Victory" and "Armed Struggle". This rapid departure from controversial slogans reveals that, in Third World countries as well as in developed countries, the influence of the leader is immense. The influence of an individual leader defines the political trend. On so many occasions someone who began by advocating "Total Liberation" ended by urging with the same enthusiasm "Liberation of any Part" and talking of "The Failure of Armed Struggle".

Confusion exists among Arafat's moderate faction, whereas harmony and unity prevail among the left and the Islamic movements. Those respondents with "no idea" about a political line also had "no idea" about a military solution to the Palestinian problem. The remainder of the Palestinian Americans questioned were either from Islamic movements or the group who are illiterate. Some felt that Islam should be allowed to resolve the issue, declaring that the conflict is merely a struggle waged among atheists and, as such, not worth bothering about.

The majority of Americanized Palestinian Americans accepted the idea of an Israeli State in historical Palestine and of this group 70 per cent had "no idea" on the question of a political line. It can be deduced that someone inclined to reject the existence of the State of Israel in historical Palestine, is likely to be more aware of, and interested in, the Palestinian problem and more specific in his attitude. Those

who accepted Israel with reservations were mostly Arafat supporters, followed by those of the left (Habash) and finally the Muslims. Fundamentalists cannot and will not accept or acknowledge that any "Muslim lands" belong to Israel. They will not accept this premise even as a simple tactic because strategy of this nature does not fall within what is permissible to the ideology of Islamic movements. The attitude of Palestinian Americans towards Palestinian organizations is a very sensitive issue, and alters with the changes that take place within these organizations. They have begun to feel that they will have to pay the price of their PLO support - particularly the activists - due to the continuous pressure of America against the PLO. Many members of the US Palestinian community have "no idea" regarding support for the PLO, but those who do support it are spread throughout the community.

#### Notes

1. Naff, 1985, 3
2. Sengstock, 1977, 54

### 3. THE EXTERNAL FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND THE ATTITUDES OF THE PALESTINIAN AMERICANS TOWARDS THEM

Contemporary history has not witnessed another cause like that of the Palestinians which has many dimensions and is affected by many elements such as the Palestinian people themselves, Israel and many countries throughout the world. The Palestinian cause has three dimensions: the local, the national (on the level of Arab countries), and international, especially the role, either negative or positive, played by the two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States.

We can see the influence of the external forces on the Palestinian cause, or more accurately, on the viewpoints taken by the Palestinian Americans towards the outside influences on their national cause, in two respects: the first is the great effect which the birthplace of the Palestinian American, as well as his residence before immigration, has on his attitude towards the different aspects of the Palestinian cause; the second is the power group which the Palestinian American considers the primary reason behind the Palestinian problem. The survey showed that 24.4 per cent believe the Western states are the reason, 36.5 per cent refer to the Zionist movement, and 25.1 per cent consider the Arab countries as holding primary responsibility for the tragedy.

It is difficult to generalise about the opinion of Palestinian Americans on the attitudes of different countries to the Palestinian cause because these attitudes differ from country to country. So we will confine ourselves to discussing their positions on the most influential factors, which originate in the Arab countries. The discussion will revolve around their stand on Jordan, with its close relation to the Palestinian cause, (since it became a cause and Jordan was established as an entity). Then we will discuss the stand of the Palestinian Americans on American and Soviet policies in the Middle East.

#### The Palestinian Americans and Jordan

Through its history, Jordan has occupied a sensitive position in regard to the land of historical Palestine and the Palestinians. Jordan accommodates the largest numbers of Palestinians outside their homeland and these numbers are equal if not more than those of Palestinians inside the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Israel. The Palestinians constitute the largest community in Jordan, outnumbering the indigenous population of the country. Also, Jordan has the longest border with the land of historical Palestine, and politically represented the majority of Palestinians in Jordan and the West Bank for nineteen years. It has continued trying to do so even after the 1967 war and the fall of the West Bank into the hands of the Israeli occupation, and even after the 1974 Rabat summit in which it was decided that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, a decision which was agreed to by King Hussein himself.

The official Jordanian-Palestinian relationship has undergone many upheavals ranging from all-out war in 1970 to almost complete coordination following the departure of the Palestinian resistance from Beirut after the 1982 Israeli invasion. Of course there is no dispute among the Palestinians - except the pro-Jordanian figures - regarding the form which relations should take with Jordan at the time of official disagreement between the Jordanian regime and the PLO. But differences occur and the attitude towards this relationship becomes very sensitive at moments of rapprochement between them, as in the period between 1982-1986.

In this study we discuss the position of the Palestinian Americans on Jordanian-Palestinian relations from different points of view, the relationship which the Palestinian Americans would prefer to have with the Jordanian regime, their attitude to the 11 February 1985 Amman accord between Mr Yasser Arafat, the Chairman of the PLO, and King Hussein, which endorsed the principle of land for peace and recognized the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in the framework of Jordanian-Palestinian confederation. This accord put the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship in the framework of cooperation in working towards a solution for the



Palestinian cause and tries to by-pass the Israeli-American veto on the participation of the PLO as an independent party and as a sole legitimate representative for the Palestinian people.

We also study their position on the convening of the 17th session of the Palestine National Council on 22 November 1984. In addition, we examine the different social factors which influence the adoption of a stand towards the Jordanian regime and the role that assimilation plays in the formation of such a position. Palestinian Americans have different points of view regarding their relations with Jordan just as they do on other issues which pertain to the Palestinian cause.

Place of birth plays an important role in defining the viewpoint of the Palestinian Americans on the relationship with Jordan. For example, the Palestinians who were born in Jordan are the ones most interested in the existence of some kind of relationship with Jordan because many of their relatives and some of their economic and social interests are there, and also by reason of the nature of their cultural and psychological socialization, in that they were raised in Jordan before their immigration to the United States. Those born in Jordan would like to see the setting-up of some kind of relationship (federation or confederation) with Jordan. The same is true for those born in other Arab countries who consider Jordan as their final shelter if the doors were shut to other Arab countries. Their fears are based on the unstable and changeable situation in which they live, and on the fact that they cannot return to their homeland before the termination of the Israeli occupation. Meanwhile Lebanon-born Palestinians do not want any kind of relationship with Jordan. They do not have any interests there, and anyway they constitute the most revolutionary group of the Palestinians in the Arab countries, and it is difficult for them to accept a special relationship with a conservative regime like the one in Jordan.

US-born Palestinians, rather like Lebanese Palestinians, do not often incline towards a special relationship with Jordan, but the reasons are different. Some of them have a poor knowledge of the Palestinian situation, so a relationship with Jordan is not of any importance to them, even though there should be normal relations with Jordan as with any other country in the world. As for those Palestinian Americans born in historical Palestine, they differ in their position on the issue of a relationship with Jordan as they differ on many other issues. Most of them have relatives in Jordan, and many of them were born in the West Bank, which became, following the Jericho conference in December 1948, part of the Jordanian Kingdom and whose population became Jordanian citizens in 1950. These interests attract them towards building relations with Jordan. However, they have had bitter experiences and went through political, economic and national problems under Jordanian rule. This is the reason which lies behind the presence of many of them in the United States, so both support for, or rejection of, the proposal for building a special relationship with Jordan is possible, and we notice hesitation in their stand on this sensitive issue.

It came out, after studying the relationship between the birthplace of the Palestinian Americans and their attitude towards Jordan, that the clearest findings were in respect of those who live in the Gulf states. They form the largest percentage of respondents who support the setting-up of close relations with Jordan, because Palestinians in the Gulf countries feel their situation there to be temporary and unstable and they know that their fate will sooner or later lie in Jordan. Those who had lived in the Gulf states were more interested in relations with Jordan than those who had lived in Jordan itself.

But the majority of the Palestinian Americans (53.3 per cent of the respondents) are in favour of having similar relations with Jordan as with any other country in the world, while 15.2 per cent of them reject any kind of relationship with it. Complete Palestinian independence is the demand of most Palestinian Americans who are concerned about the Palestinian question.

A large percentage of educated Palestinians in the United States reject establishing special relations with Jordan, while the illiterate among them (mainly women and old people), prefer some kind of connection with it, although the more educated the respondents are, the stronger the inclination among them not to have special relations with Jordan. However, those who demanded the complete cutting of

relations with Jordan included more illiterates than any other group. Those who have more education would prefer establishing regular relations just as with any other country.

The income of Palestinian Americans has an effect on the formation of their attitude towards relationships with Jordan, while their profession has no bearing on their judgement. It came out that the higher the income of the respondents, the more they desire to have closer relations with Jordan. Almost half of the respondents whose annual income is high do not see any future for the Palestinians without a special relationship with Jordan.

The other indicator which was used in order to establish the attitude of Americans towards Jordan was attitude towards the agreement between King Hussein and Yasser Arafat. It came out from talking to those who supported the agreement, that they did so not because it was an agreement with Jordan, but because it was signed by Arafat. They have strong feeling that any step taken by Arafat will necessarily serve the Palestinian cause. It is notable that some pro-Jordanian figures defended the agreement from the angle that it is in the interest of the Palestinian people, and did not defend it from the Jordanian point of view.

The Palestinian Americans showed a great fear of the Hussein-Arafat agreement, and therefore half of the respondents rejected it and a great percentage of those who accepted it, did so only with reservations.

The percentage of the supporters of the agreement is equally distributed between men and women, while those who support it with reservations are mainly men. Women tend to give a 'Yes or No' answer to most of the questions, but men tend to 'philosophise' and discuss things. As for those who reject the agreement, they are mainly men, and about one-quarter of the women respondents were ignorant of the above-mentioned agreement and consequently have no opinion.

The old people showed more tendency to support the agreement, while most of the young people rejected it. If this finding can be generalized among the Palestinian people of whom the youth represent a high percentage, then the task of the Jordanian regime to strengthen its presence in the occupied West Bank and among the Palestinian people in general will be very difficult.

Jordanian-born Palestinians showed more support for the Hussein-Arafat agreement, while the Palestinians of Lebanon were the most vigorous opponents of it, as there is no reason for them to accept it, not having any connections with Jordan. As for US-born Palestinians, whose number is growing, they are neither against nor for the agreement; they mostly had no idea about the subject. The respondents who resided in the Arab Gulf States before immigrating to the US, are more ready to accept the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement - even more than those who were born in Jordan or had formerly resided there. We established previously that the Palestinians in the Gulf relate to Jordan to a great extent owing to the fact that Jordan is the final place of refuge for them and to the fact that in the 1970s and 1980s the Palestinian bourgeoisie in the Gulf started to establish projects in Jordan and to invest their money there.

As regards those born in the land of historical Palestine, of whom the West Bank-born constitute the majority, they showed considerable support for the agreement (about 20 per cent). This is because the West Bank was for a long time under Jordanian rule, and there are still official connections with Jordan even after its occupation, but the largest percentage of those born in historical Palestine is against the February 11 accord.

Palestinian Americans who immigrated to the United States from the Palestinian refugee camps in the Occupied Territories and the neighbouring Arab countries were the greatest opponents to the Hussein-Arafat agreement. There have been many Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan since 1948, and new ones were added after many Palestinians left their homeland following the 1967 war and they live there under difficult conditions. But the emergence of the PLO and its bases inside the camps gave back to Palestinian refugees a feeling of national integrity and pride which they had lost, so it is natural that they would prefer independence under the leadership of PLO.

Respondents who had lived in the cities before their immigration to the US are the least opposed to the Hussein-Arafat agreement, because the cities, particularly those of the West Bank, are the most closely connected with Jordan, due to the semi-permanent economic interests and trade relations existing with Jordan.

As for the relationship between the level of education and position on the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement, it appeared that the higher the level of education, the more emphatic the rejection of the agreement. But those who accept it had different levels of education, and mostly come from illiterate sectors, although it must be observed that some were graduates. This observation indicates that the attitude is based on political considerations, and not merely just on an agreement between two leaders.

In regard to profession, workers constituted the highest percentage rejecting the agreement, and, as we have made clear, Palestinian workers in the US, especially the factory workers, are usually well educated. They completed secondary school and some of them completed university study, while others studied only the first year in university or left the university before completing their education; the businessmen support the agreement more than others (37.3 per cent).

Income, being an element related to profession, is of importance in this subject. Those who have a higher income among the Palestinian Americans tend to support the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement more than those who have lower income. The respondents whose income is less than \$30,000 objected to the agreement by slightly more than half (51 per cent), while the respondents whose income is more than that objected to it less (31.8 per cent). It became clear that of those whose income is more than \$50,000, 10.5 per cent rejected the agreement and 42.1 per cent supported it.

Turning to the relationship between the religion of the Palestinian Americans and their position on the 11 February Jordanian-Palestinian accord, we found that more Muslim respondents supported the accord than Christians, while the two sides rejected it by the same percentage. The difference was that a larger percentage of Christians, who are more Americanized than the Muslims, had no opinion (28.6 per cent of Christians, 11.1 per cent of Muslims). As we went more deeply into the question of the link between the religion of Palestinian Americans and their stand on the Jordanian agreement, it appeared that the less they practised religious observance, as Christians or Muslims, the more they rejected the agreement.

If we study some of the political attitudes of Palestinian Americans and their bearing on the position on the Hussein-Arafat agreement, it appears that more of those who object to taking part in the American elections totally reject the agreement (56.7 per cent against and 17.2 per cent in favour). Those who vote, either for the Republicans or the Democrats, are more inclined to accept it (30 per cent for and 14.2 per cent against). This is of course another sign of the role of assimilation. The respondents who voted for the Republican party showed more support for the agreement (37.5 per cent) than the supporters of the Democratic party (22.5 per cent).

We asked about another matter that has to do with the position on the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement: the attitude of Palestinian Americans to the possibility of reducing US aid to Israel, and also the extent of their support for the participation of the Soviet Union in the effort to solve the Palestinian problem. Respondents who see a possibility of attracting the US to the Arab side tend to support the agreement (37.5 per cent for and 22.9 per cent against), while those who do not see any possibility of drawing the US towards the Arabs did not (14.2 per cent for and 59 per cent against). As for the participation of the USSR, 16.3 per cent of the respondents who support the participation of the Soviet Union support the agreement, and 64.1 per cent reject it. By contrast, of those who do not support the participation of the Soviet Union, 20.7 per cent accept it and 39.7 per cent reject it.

Other evidence of the position of the Palestinian Americans on Jordan is their response to the question of the convening the 17th session of the PNC in Amman on November 22, 1984. This session, which is considered an indicator of attitudes towards relations with Jordan, is the straw which broke the camel's back regarding Palestinian national unity, especially the unity of the Palestinian political factions. 16.5 per cent of the respondents strongly supported the convening of the PNC session in Amman and



22 per cent supported it mildly, while 41.4 per cent rejected it totally, and 20.1 per cent had no idea. Men were more definite in their answers than women, of whom a considerable number had no opinion.

Age has strong relationship with the position adopted on the convening of the PNC in Amman; the young people are the ones who rejected it vehemently. Birth place and residence before immigration play an important role in personal judgement as the results were to a great extent similar to those concerning the Amman agreement. The respondents who were born in Jordan were the most in favour of the convening of the PNC in Amman. They are the only group whose strong support for it was not less than the rate of rejection to it (24 per cent). This is very natural because it is supposed that Palestinian Americans who were born in Jordan show more interest in having good relations with Jordan, and the convening of the PNC in Amman is evidence of such relations. Contrary to those born in Jordan, or who had lived there, were those who came from Lebanon to the United States. More than 80 per cent of them were against the convening of the PNC in Amman.

As usual those who were born in Israel and the Occupied Territories varied in their positions more than any other group of Palestinians. They are the group which are attracted by several parties according to their strength sometimes in one direction and sometimes in the opposite one. They reject the convening of the PNC more than those born in Jordan and the other Arab countries, while they accept it more than those born in Lebanon. As for those born and previously resident in the other Arab countries, they are similar in most of their opinions, and as such resemble those born and resident in Jordan. As for US-born Palestinians, most of them (65 per cent) do not have any information about the subject, and therefore have no opinion.

Most of those who rejected the convening of the PNC in Amman came from the refugee camps, and, as we have said, they adhere to their representative, the PLO - the incorruptible dream - whatever the price is, because it is the PLO which granted identity and integrity to the people in the camps. Next to the inhabitants of the camps in their stand against the convening of the PNC in Amman, come the inhabitants of the cities and then the inhabitants of the villages. The rural inhabitants, the peasants, are the most conservative and therefore accept what is presented de facto especially when the stand does directly affect their commercial interest.

The most enthusiastic supporters of the convening of the PNC in Amman and the least critical were the businessmen, while workers and the students represented the majority of the opponents. In any case, none of those with whom I talked on the subject of the convening of the PNC in Amman supported it with complete enthusiasm. Even the supporters attributed it to the circumstances which forced the Palestinian leadership, after the exodus from Beirut and the expulsion of Arafat from Syria, to convene the congress. This is a direct evidence of the extent of sensitivity of relations with Jordan among all sectors of the Palestinian people.

When we analysed the different indicators of Americanization and their relation to the position of Palestinian Americans on the convening of the PNC in Amman, we understood how Americanization affects their position, or more accurately not taking a position, on issues which are far from their lives as Americans. We found that the less the respondents knew Arabic, the more likely they were to answer 'no opinion', about the convening of the congress. 12.2 per cent of the respondents who had mastered the Arabic language answered 'no opinion', while of those who do not know any Arabic 87.4 per cent have no opinion. It was also noted that the greater the knowledge of Arabic, the more the support for the convening of the PNC. The knowledge of Arabic is an indicator of pan-Arab nationalism on the one hand and of 'conservatism' on the other. As we know, the lack of knowledge of Arabic does not lead to an increase in the numbers of those who reject the convening of the PNC in Amman, but in the number of those who have 'no opinion'. It also appeared that the respondents who speak only English do not support or object to the convening of the PNC in Amman, and most of them (91.7 per cent) have no opinion. This is evidence of great assimilation: their total remoteness from Palestinian events.

If we consider the way which the Palestinian American prefers to raise his children and his stand on the PNC in Amman, it appears that 23.8 per cent of those



who prefer the American style object to the convening of the PNC in Amman, and 25.4 per cent have no opinion. Meanwhile, 42.7 per cent of those who wanted to bring up their children according to Arab culture rejected it, and 6.4 per cent have no opinion. The people who have reservations about both kinds of education on the basis that the American way contradicts Arab norms and values, and the Arab way is backward are mostly from the enlightened intellectuals and relatively independent in their thinking, 45.8 per cent of these people reject the convening of the PNC.

92 per cent of those who do not follow the news about Palestine at all, and who are actually more Americanized, expressed no opinion about the convening of the PNC in Amman, while about 50 per cent of those who pursue Palestinian news on a regular basis, and 27.8 per cent of those who take an interest in Palestinian news were against holding the PNC there.

The Palestinian Americans who showed a desire to leave the US and return to their homeland when the problem is solved showed less support for the convening of the PNC in Amman than those who do not want to return or who do not have a clear idea about it. The majority of respondents expressed their readiness to return if this was possible, but we have suspicions about this. We base our doubts on personal experiences we had with them in talking to them and on the visits they made home. Many of them had never visited Israel and the Occupied Territories although they carry American citizenship and they can visit whenever they want. It should be noted that the large percentage of Palestinian Americans who expressed their desire to return are not in a good economic and social situation in the United States.

So far we have talked about the attitudes of Palestinian Americans towards the different issues relating to the position of Jordan on the Palestinian cause and on the Palestinians. Now we will deal with the position of the supporters of the different Palestinian factions on the relationship with Jordan to see whether their positions come into line with those of the organizations which they support, or if the positions of the organizations are in harmony with the aspirations of their supporters.

As is known, there is no stable policy of the PLO towards Jordan and towards many Arab and other countries. It quickly moves from total enmity to total alliance. The supporters of the official leadership of the PLO explain it as respectable flexibility which may be adjusted to the conditions of struggle in which the Palestinian revolution lives while the supporters of the opposition describe it as courtship with the right and the Arab reactionaries. The study shows that most of the respondents tend to reject establishing special relations with Jordan, and as we have said, about 20 per cent of them supported federation or confederation between the Palestinians and Jordan, while about 53 per cent of them supported relations with Jordan like normal relations with any independent state. About fifteen per cent of the respondents objected to establishing any form of relations with the Jordanian regime, and this reflects the size of the gap created between Palestinians and Jordan over the years.

The supporters of Arafat were the most enthusiastic about establishing special relations with Jordan, and they were completely different from other groups in this. About 61 per cent of Arafat supporters supported establishing special relations, while 11 per cent of supporters of the Islamic movements accepted it which is a sizeable percentage, but looks small in relation to the supporters of Arafat. (This study took place in the beginning of 1986 when the relationship between the leadership of the PLO and the Jordanian regime was good.) This reflects the conservative nature of the supporters of the Islamic movement and also it clarifies the extent of the special relations between the Jordanian regime and the religious parties, especially the Muslim Brotherhood.

As for the supporters of the left, they are the most steadfast in rejecting that kind of relations with Jordan because of the ideological and behavioural gap between the two sides. They tend to insist on relations with Jordan as with any other independent country. Also the supporters of the Left constitute the majority of those who do not want any relations with Jordan. The respondents among Habash supporters constitute 51 per cent of them while Arafat supporters make up fifteen per cent. This reveals the dissatisfaction of some of his supporters with the policy of rapprochement

with Jordan and shows that two or three years of 'coordination' between the two sides can not wipe out long years of fighting.

The 57 per cent of the respondents who have no opinion regarding which organization to support also have no opinion concerning relations with Jordan. They are very Americanized and do not know much about the different Palestinian factions or about the relations with Jordan. Also about 24 per cent of those who have no opinion concerning relations with Jordan are Arafat supporters. They hesitate to take a particular position due to the variability of Arafat's relations with Jordan, as a considerable part of his supporters cannot decide on any form of relationship which they would apply to Jordan.

The breakdown of Arafat's supporters is as follows: about 44 per cent wanted special relations with Jordan, 38.7 per cent wanted only diplomatic relations as with any other regime, eight per cent do not want any form of relations and 9.3 per cent have no opinion. As for Habash supporters, 5.4 per cent support special relations with Jordan, while 65 per cent of them support relations with it as an independent state, 28.8 per cent rejected any form of relations, and the rest have no opinion. Of the supporters of the Islamic movement, fifteen per cent of them supported a special federal or confederal relationship with it, while 57.5 per cent demanded relations with Jordan as an independent state, 12.5 per cent do not support any relations, and the rest have no opinion.

Supporters of the different Palestinian factions among Palestinian Americans were divided over the question of the convening of the latest PNC session in Amman. The session differed in quality from the 16th PNC session which was held in Algeria after the exodus of the Palestinian resistance from Beirut in 1982. The latest session came after a big split in the ranks of the Fatah movement, the largest Palestinian faction, and a split within the PLO as well. The convening of the PNC in Amman itself without unanimous agreement by all Palestinian factions, as had existed before, added further reasons for the conflict within the PLO ranks, and in the ranks of the Palestinian people in general.

As there was division among the different sectors of the Palestinian people over support for and objections to the PNC session, so there was division among the Palestinian community in the US including the supporters of the different Palestinian factions. It came out, and this is very natural, that the largest percentage of supporters for the convening of the PNC in Amman are Arafat supporters, but no other group supported it. Although the Arab Liberation Front, which is affiliated with Iraq, supported Arafat in his step, this organization does not have any supporters among the Palestinian Americans in the United States. It was noted also that a large percentage (about 50 per cent) of those who supported the convening of the PNC in Amman only with reservations, were Arafat supporters. This shows that a large percentage of his supporters were hesitant to judge this event. This group held that the price of convening the PNC was very high because the result killed all hope of achieving unity among the Palestinian factions for a long time, but also they were not sure that the Jordanian regime could agree to something which would ultimately be in the interest of the Palestinians. Also there was a considerable percentage (about seventeen per cent) who doubted the wisdom of convening the PNC in Amman, but finally agreed with it; these were among the supporters of the Islamic movement. They felt uncomfortable about being identified with the left wing or being strictly religious.

The respondents were divided, according to our study, as follows: Arafat supporters (42.1 per cent) were strongly in favour of the convening of the PNC, 38.2 per cent mildly, 3.9 per cent against and 15.8 per cent had no opinion. As for Habash supporters, 4.1 per cent supported it strongly, 9.6 per cent mildly, 78.1 per cent against and 8.2 per cent had no opinion. Finally, regarding supporters of the Islamic movements, 5 per cent strongly supported the congress, 25 per cent mildly, 45 per cent were against and 25 per cent had no opinion. In reference to the latter, it may be noted that usually a large percentage of supporters of the Islamic movements do not bother to answer specific political questions which are outside the circle of their concerns. They consider them 'trifling secular things'.

## The Palestinian Americans and the Policy of the United States in the Middle East

### Evaluation

Studying the stand taken by the Arabs in general, the Palestinians, and in particular the Palestinian Americans, towards the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, is very important because it may be considered a sign of the way that is being taken or will be taken by the Arabs in defining the conditions and the forms of their future development. It is distinctive in the relationship of the Arab people and some of the governments, to the US and the Soviet Union that their relations with the state they consider their ally, the USSR, are not good, while relations are very good with their 'first enemy', the USA. This is simply explained in the light of the regimes and their interest, but very odd in the people. The person who demonstrates against the US and is badly hurt as a result, is the same person who dreams of going to the US in order to study or work. Everything American is good for most of the Arabs except for its stand on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Everything concerning the Soviet Union is negative, except for its stand on the same question.

The United States is an active element in the Middle East, where it has a lot of influence through military bases, economic interests, and educational connections. The US has a lot of friends but also a lot of enemies in the area. It considers the Middle East an area of strategic interest. The Arabs, whether friends or enemies of the United States, consider it primarily responsible for Israeli behaviour against them, and the continuation of Israeli occupation of their land. Palestinian Americans are faced with this problem most seriously because they feel a contradiction between their belonging to their new country and its hostile activity against the national rights of their people. Here the equation becomes very hard because the more Americanized the person becomes the less he is concerned with the Palestinian national interest. This is not applicable to the Jewish community in the US because there is no contradiction between belonging to America and loyalty to Israel. The more the Jewish American supports America the more he supports Israel, and vice versa.

It is important to study the stand of Palestinian Americans towards the US and its policy in the Middle East and to follow up the influence of the different social variables, particularly assimilation into the American society, on these attitudes. We examine these attitudes through Palestinian American opinion on three topics: the extent of the positivity or the negativity of US policy towards the Middle East crisis; the possibility that America might reduce its aid to Israel; what should the Arabs do, be more friendly or more hostile with the US or what? Then we discuss the stand of the supporters of the different factions of the PLO on these matters.

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, American-Israeli relations have developed positively, except for the period after the Suez war in 1956, as a result of the English, French, and Israeli tripartite aggression against Egypt. This resulted in discord between American and Israeli policy because of some American-British conflicts. The special relationship between Israel and the United States continued to develop, particularly after the June 1967 war. Other elements later increased this relationship: continuing Arab weakness; the new American policy after the Vietnam debacle to 'localize' the conflict; the collapse of the Shah's regime in Iran; and the new Egyptian policy after Camp David.

It seems that the special relationship between the US and Israel will continue to be stronger than one might think. It is not a result of Zionist pressure on the American leadership, and could be changed in the event that the Arabs become aware of the knack of influencing the American mind. The Zionist influence on American policy is described by Paul Findley.<sup>1</sup> We believe that I. Ibrahim, research professor at the Georgetown University Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, is correct in saying that "unless an overwhelming force majeure takes hold in the Arab World, which is most unlikely, the continuation of the special relationship well into the foreseeable future for many of the same reasons that helped it develop and mature in the last four decades, is likely. First, among these reasons is the failure of the Arab world to



continued in order to maintain division and weakness among the Arabs.<sup>2</sup>

Superficial American participation in peace projects for the Middle East crisis started in 1946 with the Committee formed by the British Government. American projects and American activity concerning the Middle East proceeded with the Dulles plan of 26th August 1956. Eisenhower's plan in 1957, 1958, the American plan after the War of June 1967 to the Rogers plan in 1970. Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy was a preliminary to the Israeli-Egyptian disengagement agreement. Then there was the Carter plan presented in the speech delivered before the General Assembly of the United Nations on 4th October 1977, and finally Reagan's initiative of 5th September 1982. The common feature of all these plans over the past 40 years is that they all regard the Palestinian cause as a refugee question. The first principle in Reagan's initiative states that there can be no Palestinian state because it will not serve peace. On the other hand, the plan does not support Israel's annexation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which is the reason for Israel's rejection of it.

It is not surprising that the Arabs should officially reject most of the previous American plans. Some were accepted with reservations, but were rejected by Israel and by the Arab people, and usually rejected by the Palestinians represented by the different factions of the PLO. The Arab regimes, including President Nasser as their leader, agreed that the Rogers plan had some positive aspects in its demand for Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories, but it was rejected by Israel for the same reasons, and by the Palestinians because it did not mention their problem. This caused a deterioration in the relationship between the PLO and President Nasser at that time. Kissinger's diplomacy, despite the Egyptian-Israeli and Syrian-Israeli clashes, was successful and was officially accepted by the Arab regimes, but were not received favourably by the people. Kissinger based his step-by-step diplomacy on the idea of an American professor of political science, dealing with each side of the conflict alone and partitioning the dispute. At that time Professor Reisman wrote that the relationship between Israel and Egypt, Israel and Syria, Israel and Jordan, and the Palestinians is a group of problems that each needs a special point of entry strategy, and separate diplomacy.<sup>3</sup>

The American-Soviet declaration that was signed in New York on 1st October 1977, between Gromyko, the Soviet Foreign Minister and Vance, the American Secretary of State, was one of the plans sponsored by the US most accepted by the Arabs whether officially or by the PLO. Mr Farouq Qaddoumi, the head of the Political Department of the PLO, in a statement concerning the Soviet-American communique about the Middle East crisis recognised that "the Soviet-American declaration included positive signs concerning a just solution to the problem of the Middle East and concerning the assertion of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and the participation of representatives of the Palestinians in peace negotiations. The real content of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians is what the UN has approved and asserted, particularly concerning the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, the Palestinians' return to their homeland and self-determination under the leadership of the PLO."<sup>4</sup>

This is the shape of American policy concerning the Middle East since the existence of this problem. Its enduring feature is the denial that this problem is the problem of the Palestinian people struggling for its right of self-determination, although the form and the tactics are variable.

In view of American policy in the Middle East, it is natural that the Palestinians and the Palestinian Americans, regardless of their social conditions and their political attitudes, describe American policy in the area as being negative because of its clear, complete and absolute bias towards Israel. In the study, only 0.7 per cent of the respondents answered that American policy towards the Middle East is positive, which is a very small rate. The vast majority (88.5 per cent) of the respondents answered that American policy in the area is negative, 6.3 per cent said it is neutral, and 4.5 per cent had no opinion. This is the response of Palestinian Americans living in the US who have interest there. We believe that the results would not be favourable to the US if the study included all the Palestinians and their communities



in different parts of the world. This demonstrates the great gap between the opinion of the Palestinians and the policy pursued by most of the Arab regimes towards the United States.

Since the vast majority of the Palestinian Americans see American policy in the Middle East as negative, we decided to discuss only the ways in which Americanization influences their stand on American policy because there is almost no influence from the other social factors. There is no difference between the student, the worker, the employee or any others concerning this policy.

Around 95 per cent of the respondents who speak Arabic well answered that the policy of the US towards the Middle Eastern cause is negative, 30 per cent of those who do not know Arabic at all gave the same answer. Of those who speak Arabic, around three per cent said that it is a neutral policy, and around 47 per cent of those who do not know Arabic gave the same answer. Only one per cent of those who know Arabic answered that they do not have any opinion and 20 per cent of those who do not know Arabic gave the same answer.

More light may be shed on the influence of assimilation on the attitude towards American policy in the Middle East and the language the Palestinian American uses, when discussing those who know Arabic. 90 per cent of the respondents who used mixed Arabic and English regard American policy as negative. The significant difference in evaluating American policy may be seen among those who do not use Arabic at all: eighteen per cent of these people responded that the policy of the US is negative, while 64 per cent said it is neutral, which is a clear evidence that assimilation into American society tends to improve their opinion of US policy in the Middle East.

Further evidence of assimilation is the nationality of friends that the respondent prefers. Only 35 per cent of those who prefer to have American friends answered that American policy is negative, while 53 per cent of them described it as neutral. A sizeable proportion (95 per cent) of those who prefer to have Arab friends described the American policy as being negative and only two per cent described it as neutral. The relationship between the attitude of the Palestinian American towards American policy in the Middle East and the way he desires to bring up his children is also a sign of the effect of assimilation into American society: only 38 per cent of the respondents who prefer to bring their children up in the American way said that the American policy is negative, and 53 per cent said it is neutral whereas 94 per cent of those who preferred the Arab way said that American policy is negative.

Those who follow Palestinian news tend to evaluate American policy in the Middle East as negative to a greater extent than those who do not. The results show that the less the respondents followed the news the less they objected to American policy, and consider it neutral but hardly positive. The number of those who have no opinion is greater.

94 per cent of those who would like to return when the Palestinian problem is solved tend to describe American policy in the Middle East as being negative, while two per cent said it is neutral. 65 per cent of those who would not return answered that the policy is negative and 20 per cent said it is neutral.

### Possibilities of Change

We move from the way the Palestinian Americans describe American policy in the Middle East to their anticipation of the future of this policy and the possibility that the US might reduce its total support for Israel. In fact there is a belief in the possibility of changing American policy and making it closer to the Arabs.

Most Arab political movements, including the PLO, operate now on the basis that there is a possibility of 'winning' America to the Arab side. This idea exists among a sizeable proportion of the Palestinian American population, particularly the intellectuals. "Taking" America from Israel is a matter of time. The Arabs need better tactics, more knowledge and understanding of the American mind.<sup>6</sup> Edward Said sees that there is another trend of opinion in the United States favouring the interest of

the Arab cause; it is weak but bold and he gives an example of three intellectual Americans who challenge the dominant trend that supports Israel in the US.<sup>6</sup>

Palestinian Americans who see the real influence of the Zionists in the US and how much American leaders have invested in Israel, probably are more convinced than the rest of the Arabs and the other Palestinians that it is almost impossible that the US should change its policy towards Israel. Those who are convinced of the possibility of changing US policy towards Israel do not express the reality of what they see about the US and its strong relations with Israel, but are influenced by Arab policies towards the US and by the behaviour of the official leadership of the PLO.

We analysed the relationship of this view (that the US might reduce its friendship with Israel) to the different social variables among the Palestinian Americans. The majority of the respondents (66 per cent) believe that the US cannot change its special relationship with Israel. Men were more specific than the women in their answers, whether 'Yes' or 'No'. The rate of women who answered with no opinion (18 per cent) was higher than that of the men. It was clear that the younger the age of the respondent, the less he believes in this possibility. 72 per cent of the respondents under 40 said that the US cannot reduce its aid to Israel, while 45 per cent of those who are over 40 gave the same answer.

The place of birth and place of residence of the Palestinian American before emigrating to the US is one of the most influential elements in defining his opinion in the political questions concerning the Palestinian cause, including the possibility that the US might reduce its relations with Israel. It was clear that most respondents who rejected this were those born in Lebanon or who resided there before emigrating. Almost in equal proportion to the Lebanese-born who rejected the idea, were those who resided in Israel (the Arabs of 1948) before they emigrated to the US. The Lebanese-born Palestinians were the most politically opposed to the US because of the power of the political movement there, and because of the presence of Palestinian organizations for a long period. Those who resided in Israel rejected the idea in large number, due to their close acquaintance with the extent of the strong relations between Israel and the US.

The Gulf-born were the most optimistic that the US might reduce its support for Israel, followed by those born in Jordan, and those born in the Occupied Territories. Half of the respondents among the US-born answered with no opinion on the subject. The host countries of the Palestinians have a big influence on defining their opinions on the different cases connected with the Palestinian problem.

Education also influences this subject but to a lesser degree than the place of birth and the place of residence before immigration. The illiterate respondents were the majority of those who said that the US might reduce its support to Israel. The undergraduate university students were the least to believe so. Graduates were divided into two equal parts concerning the possibility or the impossibility that the US might reduce its support for Israel.

The profession of the Palestinian American influenced his opinion on this subject: the majority of workers among the respondents said that it was impossible that the US might reduce its support to Israel, followed by the students, and last were the businessmen. Income had a similar influence. Those whose annual income is between \$20,000 and \$29,000 are the minority of respondents who would expect the deterioration of American-Israeli relations in favour of the Arabs. Those whose annual income is more than 50,000 dollars are the largest group that would expect it. Only 42 per cent of them answered that it is impossible that the US would reduce its support to Israel, while 80 per cent of the first group gave the same answer.

The other important influence after place of birth and previous residence is religion, which is also one of the signs of assimilation in American society. Asked about the likelihood that the US would reduce its support for Israel, the Muslim respondents were less confident in the US than the Christians. Both Muslims and Christians trust the US to a considerable extent (32 per cent of Muslims, 45 per cent of Christians). Nineteen per cent of the Christian respondents and seven per cent of the Muslims have no opinion.

The less religious the Palestinian American is, the less he expects change in US policy towards Israel. Those who belong to Islamic religious parties do not see any possibility of it and consider Israeli-American relations a Christian-Jewish alliance directed against Islam. Ordinary believers accept that it might be possible to create a gap between America and Israel, if the Arab and Muslim leaderships behaved more 'reasonably' and united to put pressure on America.

Two political indicators were used to show their relevance to the American stand towards Israel; the opinions of the Palestinian Americans towards including the USSR in efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, and their attitudes towards the political solution of the Palestinian cause. We discussed these two aspects in terms of their relationship to the view of the possibility that the US might reduce its support for Israel in order to see who had definite views concerning the participation of the USSR in peace efforts, and whether there is a connection between their opinions about the Soviet Union and about US policy in the Middle East. Also we looked at attitudes towards a peaceful solution, compared with the view of US policy.

The higher the rate among the Palestinian Americans in support of Soviet participation, the lower the rate in favour of depending on the US. 77 per cent of the respondents who support the Soviet participation strongly have no doubt that the US will remain a strong ally of Israel. 70 per cent of those who support the US participation reluctantly feel the same and 51 per cent do not support Soviet participation, but are sure that America will remain a friend of Israel.

It became clear that the less the respondent believed in a political solution, the less confident he is in the US and in the possibility of shifting its relations with Israel. This is not strange because most of the Palestinians who believe in the political solution, think that this solution cannot take place except with the help of the US. They believe that the more neutral the US is between the Arabs and the Israelis, the more a solution might be possible and just.

#### What To Do

We asked the Palestinian Americans how they thought Arabs and Palestinians should behave towards the US concerning its policy.

In the Arab World, opinions differ as to how to deal with the bias of the US. This differentiation is clear in the behaviour of friendly Arab regimes towards the US and in the behaviour of the Arab nations and the so called 'terrorism' that is usually practised against the American interests in the area.

The Palestinian Americans' opinions differed greatly on the question of what to do? 23.9 per cent of the respondents answered that the Arabs should move closer to America, 7.1 per cent to keep relations as they are, 18.7 per cent that it is necessary to reduce relations; 42.2 per cent that it is necessary to cut relations completely with it, and the rest (8.1 per cent) have no opinion.

We studied the effect of all the social factors, including assimilation, on the attitudes of Palestinian Americans towards the American bias towards Israel. The male respondents, for example, were more inclined to have negative reactions towards the US: 48 per cent of the male respondents said that it is necessary to cut relations with America; 26.8 per cent of the women gave the same answer. Those in favour of moving closer were divided in almost identical proportions between men and women (23.5 per cent, 25.4 per cent). There is a big difference between the women who wanted to keep relations as they are (16.9 per cent) and the men (3.6 per cent). Women are more conservative, and are more ignorant of the matters connected with the Palestinian cause and pay less attention to it.

As usual, the place of birth has a special importance in this subject. The Lebanese-born respondents had greater tendency towards the view that the Arabs should reduce relations with the US, while the American-born had a greater tendency to support closer ties to the US. Also the respondents' previous place of residence has a big influence. Those who resided in Lebanon have a pronounced tendency to cut relations with the US (50 per cent) but those who resided in the countries of the



Arabian Gulf (31.6 per cent) were least in favour of this. This of course excluded the US-born.

None of those who resided in refugee camps, either in the Occupied Territories, or in neighbouring Arab countries that have camps, answered in favour of the necessity to get closer to the US, to improve relations with it or even to keep them as they are. The dominant opinion among the Palestinians either in the US or elsewhere, is that the US is directly responsible for the continuation of Palestinian misery, and consequently, the Palestinian refugees who suffer most from the Palestinian problem are the most opposed to US policy in the Middle East and most keen for an Arab reaction against the US. But because of their low standard of education, they are the largest group to have no opinion.

Those who resided in cities before they emigrated to the US are less hostile to America and its policy. The city residents mostly work in commerce, and consequently, their interests are tied to the US and the other foreign states, which forces them to take a less enthusiastic stand in objecting the American policy. The rural residents fall between the residents of the camps and the residents of the cities in respect of their feelings towards the US.

The more educated the Palestinian-American is, the more he is against the Arabs' moving closer to the US, in spite of the fact that a considerable percentage of academic Palestinians are in favour of it. A sizeable proportion (30.4 per cent) of students prefer that the Arabs should move towards the US because most of them were born there and are more assimilated in American society, but the largest percentage of them (57.1 per cent) want to cut relations with America. The largest group of Palestinian Americans who want to have closer relations with the US are the businessmen. The students and the workers who are against it form a sizeable proportion, despite the high percentage of students who were born in the US as mentioned above, and call for closer relations.

The Palestinian American supporters of the Republican party called for closer ties with the US (56 per cent in favour) in order to incline it towards the Arabs because the Republican party is the American conservative party and it is dominant in the US now and getting close to the US means getting close to their preferred party. The supporters of the Democrats called for it by a smaller percentage (38.5 per cent), but this percentage is high too. Of those who have never participated in voting in the American elections, 17.4 per cent called for closeness to the US. On the other hand, 20.5 per cent of the Democratic party supporters, sixteen per cent of the Republican party supporters and 50 per cent of those who do not vote called for the cutting of relations.

It was odd that 55 per cent of the respondents, who declared that it is possible that the US might reduce its support for Israel, advocated the necessity of the Arabs' cutting their relations with the US. This result can only be explained by the fact that these people understand that cutting relations with America forms an element of pressure on its support for Israel.

It was clear that the respondents who are against the participation of the Soviet Union in efforts to solve the Palestinian problem form the majority of those who call for close ties to the US (43 per cent). It may be supposed that the higher the rate of those who call for Soviet participation, the less the tendency to support ties with the US. 58 per cent of the respondents who strongly support the participation of the Soviet Union called for cutting relations with America, but 36 per cent of those who are against it also called for cutting these relations. This shows many do not support either the Soviets nor the Americans, and taking a stand against the Soviets does not automatically mean that the person is for the Americans.

When we studied signs of assimilation into American society and its relationship with Palestinian American attitudes to the view that the Arabs should take toward America, it was clear that the more the respondent knew Arabic the more he preferred cutting relations with America. 48.8 per cent of those who speak Arabic well and 23 per cent of those who speak it poorly are in favour of cutting relations with the US. Those who do not speak Arabic at all and who are more Americanized called for moving closer to the US (75 per cent for and 6.3 per cent against). The less the



respondent used Arabic, the more he called for strengthening Arab relations with the USA.

It seems that these signs, which show the extent of assimilation in American society, play a big role in affecting Palestinian American opinion concerning matters connected with the US and its policy and the Arab reaction towards it. Their effect on matters connected with Israel is weaker, which means that the Palestinian American is more American in his views when speaking about America, and more Palestinian when speaking about Israel.

Another sign of assimilation is the kind of friends that the Palestinian American chooses; 70 per cent of the respondents who prefer American friends believe in the necessity of moving closer to the US, while 17.6 per cent believe in cutting relations with it. 16.4 per cent of those who prefer Arab friends want to move closer to America, but 45.7 per cent of them would prefer to cut relations with the US.

It was clear that 60 per cent of those who prefer to bring their children up in the American way want the Arabs to move closer to the US, while 20 per cent want to cut relations; only 18.5 per cent of those who prefer to bring their children up in the Arab way want to move closer to the US and 44 per cent of them want to cut relations. The respondents who pay more attention to Palestinian news have a stronger tendency to want to cut relations with the US. 15.2 per cent of the Palestinian Americans who will return home if it becomes possible want closer relations with America, while 49.2 per cent of them want to cut relations. 75 per cent of those who would not return prefer to strengthen relations, while fifteen per cent of them would cut relations.

Finally, when we discussed the relationship between Arab reaction towards the US and the influence of the Palestinian organizations, it is clear that the biggest proportion (around 45 per cent) of those respondents who believe it is necessary to move towards the US support Arafat, followed by 40.6 per cent of the respondents who have no idea concerning the other Palestinian organizations, then 4.7 per cent of Habash supporters, and 7.8 per cent of the supporters of the Islamic movements. 20.4 per cent of those who see the necessity of cutting relations with the US support Arafat, 37.2 per cent of them support Habash, and 16.8 per cent support Islamic movements; the small proportion that is left is distributed among the other Palestinian organizations.

The last American plan 'to achieve peace' in the Middle East was the initiative of President Reagan on 5th September 1982. The Palestinians' lack of confidence in American policy is demonstrated by our finding that, although Arab regimes had officially accepted this plan, of Palestinian Americans who had become very much Americanized (and among them some are in the party of President Reagan) only three per cent of the respondents strongly supported the plan, 11.3 per cent mildly, 68.3 per cent rejected it totally and 17.4 per cent have no opinion.

In spite of the modest activity of Palestinians in the US, they expect that American public opinion should be more on their side. A lot of them are astonished that a lot of Americans who were against the American war in Vietnam and support the liberation movements in Latin America, side with Israel. The Palestinians and the Arabs feel that their case is just. They want others to have the same feeling without doing anything to create this feeling among them. On 8th August 1961 President Abdul Nasir wrote a letter to President Kennedy, summarizing the Palestinians' and Arabs' view of their case. Abdul Nasir wrote: "One who did not own gave a promise to one who did not deserve it, then both the non-owner and the undeserving managed by use of force and deceit to steal from the legitimate owner his right to what he owned".<sup>7</sup>

We studied the attitude of the Palestinian Americans who support the different Palestinian organizations towards the policy of the US in the Middle East. The almost unanimous resolution of the supporters of the different Palestinian organizations was that the policy of the US in the Middle East is negative, which reflects the Palestinian Americans' disappointment with the policy. 29.6 per cent of the respondents who see US policy in the Middle East negatively, support the leftists (Habash), 27.4 per cent support the moderates (Arafat) and sixteen per cent support the Islamic movement. 58.8 per cent of those who believe that American policy is neutral do not support any

of the Palestinian organizations; of those who have no opinion in the matter, 17.6 per cent support Arafat.

Although a sizeable proportion of the Palestinian Americans, regardless of their orientation, evaluate American policy towards the Palestinians negatively, yet this does not clearly reflect the other side of the matter: defining the stand of the US and its support for Israel. Among Palestinian Americans the supporters of the Islamic movements were the most confident of the possibility that the US might reduce its support for Israel, while fifteen per cent of the supporters of Habash did so. 39.6 per cent of the supporters of Arafat were not sure that the US would reduce its support for Israel, but said probably it would, then came 31 per cent of those who do not belong to any Palestinian organization, and 12.5 per cent of the supporters of the leftists and the same percentage of the supporters of Islamic movements. The existence of a relatively sizeable proportion of the supporters of Arafat who see the possibility of moving the US towards the Arabs give some justification for the attempts of the leadership of the PLO to 'gain political progress' on the American stage.

As we might expect the supporters of the left tend mostly to suggest the impossibility of changing US policy towards Israel in the interest of the Arabs (35 per cent of Habash supporters), and 26 per cent of Arafat supporters also had this opinion, which reflects that there is confusion among the supporters of the moderates (Arafat). 6.8 per cent of Arafat's supporters gave a positive answer to that possibility, 25.7 per cent said it is probable and 62.2 per cent said 'no'; the rest had no opinion. This shows the extent of contradiction between the public opinion of the masses of the faction and its political practices, which implies lack of political awareness by the base of the policies of the leadership, and by the leadership of the ambitions of its supporters. This also shows that the tendency of the Palestinian Americans still means support for the individuals more than for the political programme and political behaviour.

Among the respondents who support Habash, 4.1 per cent answered 'yes' to that question, 8.2 per cent answered 'probably', 84.9 per cent answered 'no' and 1.4 per cent had no opinion. This shows that there is more harmony between the leaders of the movement and its public. Only 15.4 per cent of the supporters of the Islamic movements agreed with the possibility of changing US policy towards Israel, the same percentage said 'probably', 59 per cent said 'no', and 10.3 per cent had no opinion. These results prove that those who had no confidence in the US reducing its bias toward Israel were a sizeable proportion (65.8 per cent) of all the organizations, although of different percentages.

Palestinian Americans who support the different organizations and have such opinions about American policy in the Middle East, are more divided over the way to handle this policy in the future and the necessity of developing or limiting relations with the United States. It is clear that the largest proportion - 45.3 per cent of those who call for closer relations with America - are the supporters of Arafat, followed by those (40.6 per cent) who do not support any of the organizations. Eight per cent of the supporters of Islamic movements, and 4.5 per cent of the supporters of Habash, had the same opinion.

Concerning the respondents who called for keeping relations as they are, a sizeable proportion among them (31.6 per cent) supported Arafat. The sizeable proportion who are in favour of cutting relations or reducing them are supporters of the left (37.2 per cent); those who wanted to cut relations and the 40.8 per cent who wanted to reduce them were Habash supporters.

Those who have no idea about relations with the US are an appreciable number; they have no relations with any of the Palestinian organizations and are the most assimilated into American society. 31.8 per cent of the supporters of the Islamic movements have no opinion about this problem because they are not concerned with this matter or because they are illiterate or old women who do not understand it.

39.7 per cent of the supporters of Arafat want to get closer to the US, 8.2 per cent want to keep the relationship as it is, 13.7 per cent want to reduce it. A considerable number (31.5 per cent), want to cut relations totally, and 6.8 per cent have no opinion. 4.2 per cent of the supporters of Habash are in favour of closer relations, 6.9 per cent want to keep them as they are, 27.8 per cent favour reducing them, 58.3

per cent want to cut them, and 2.8 per cent have no opinion. At the same time, 13.2 per cent of the supporters of the Islamic movements would prefer closer relations with the US, 50 per cent would like to cut them and 18.4 per cent have no opinion.

These results point to two important things: first, there is no consistency among the supporters of the moderate though conservative national-religious group, (Arafat) of whom 39.7 per cent want to improve the relationship and 31.5 per cent want to cut it. The supporters of the left (Habash) and the Islamic movements are more consistent in their views; second, the supporters of the left and the Islamic movements are more interested in cutting relations with the US.

#### Palestinian Americans and Soviet policy in the Middle East

When the Palestinian crisis increased before the establishment of the State of Israel, the Soviet Union, as mentioned in the speech of the Soviet President Andrei Gromyko on 14th May 1947, was in favour of establishing an independent democratic Arab-Jewish state. But the situation in Palestine became so complex that the Soviet Union agreed to partition: that a Jewish state and an Arab state should be established in Palestine side by side.

After the June 1967 war and the Israeli occupation of the rest of historical Palestine and other Arab land, the Soviet Union cut its diplomatic relations with Israel. On 19th June 1967, the Soviet Union submitted a compromise plan to the General Assembly of the United Nations, in which it called for complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied land. Because the Palestinian cause appeared as a cause of the Palestinian nation struggling for its political identity and its right to self-determination only in the 1970s, the Soviet plan of that time did not include anything about the Palestinian nation. But later Soviet proposals and projects endorse the rights of the Palestinian nation and stand with the Palestinian revolution and the Arab countries that have suffered from the Israeli occupation, politically, militarily and spiritually.

The most distinguished recent Soviet plan was the Brezhnev initiative which was submitted at the 26th Conference of the Soviet Communist Party. The project can be summarized as follows:<sup>8</sup>

- (i) An international conference attended by all parties including the PLO.
- (ii) Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab land taken in 1967.
- (iii) The right of the Palestinian people to establish their independent state in their home country practising their right of self determination.
- (iv) Guarantees of the security and sovereignty of the states of the area and their right to live peacefully as a result of an international commitment.
- (v) Cooperation of the Soviet Union with the European countries, America, and whoever sincerely supports a just and permanent peace in the Middle East.

It is probably difficult for American propaganda and the American lifestyle to influence negatively a large proportion of the Palestinian Americans or any other American minority concerning their own national cause. It is almost impossible, no matter how great the degree of the Palestinian American's assimilation, that he would support Israel at the expense of the Palestinians, in spite of the fact that the degree of his enthusiasm and his attitudes would be affected in one way or another. His stand on the Soviet Union should be more open to influence, at least theoretically because that stand has no direct connection with the special national cause of the Palestinian American. American propaganda is, occasionally, applied to the Palestinians and the Palestinian cause, while the propaganda against the Soviet Union is a major factor in life in the United States. The capitalist American lifestyle makes ordinary people automatically hostile to the type of life that they hear about in socialist society.

The result of our studies showed that the largest group of Palestinian Americans (37.8 per cent of the respondents) believe that the Soviet Union is not a thorough and permanent friend of the Arabs. 23.7 per cent said that the Soviet Union is an enemy of the Palestinians, 33.3 per cent said that the Soviet Union is a



trustworthy friend, 5.2 per cent had no opinion. We think that the largest number hesitate in judging the policies of the Soviet Union, and they are also the largest number of the Palestinians, wherever they are, who judge attitudes towards the Palestinians on a separate basis and not on the whole policy and strategy of the Soviet Union.

It is difficult for the Palestinians wherever they are, including the Palestinians of the US, to answer that the Soviet Union is their enemy, except from a religious perspective. Also, long years of mobilization against communism make it difficult for the Palestinians to judge the Soviet Union a permanent friend and ally, regardless of the degree of help or the coherence of the political stand of the Soviet Union with the Palestinians. Therefore, it is natural that the answer should be that the Soviet Union is a temporary friend of the Arabs.

Palestinian American feelings of the necessity of the participation of the Soviet Union in efforts to solve the Palestinian problem were very much consistent with feelings about the friendship of the Soviet Union. Some people who were hesitant about the friendship answered that they would not mind its participation with others of the 'non-friends'. Those who have no opinion formed a relatively large ratio (11.2 per cent) because it is difficult for some people to define their position in such a detailed case.

More Palestinian American men believe that the Soviets are friends with the Arabs than women (38.8 per cent are men, 32.4 per cent are women). Also more men than women consider the US a friend (25.3 per cent are men, 18.3 per cent are women). This contradicts the supposition that the women would take a more moderate stand in judging such matters. What bridged this difference in number is the considerable proportion of women who have no opinion.

Place of birth is a very important element in influencing the Palestinian American's stand towards the Soviet Union. The Lebanese born respondents are the most numerous among the Palestinian Americans who consider the Soviet Union as a thorough friend of the Arabs (64.7 per cent), while 17.6 per cent do not consider it a friend at all. The Palestinian-born (19.2 per cent) did not consider it a friend. Among the respondents, the Jordanian-born are the least confident of the USSR's friendship towards the Arabs - only 13.8 per cent considered the USSR a friend of the Arabs, while 31.0 per cent did not consider it so.

Fewer of the Jordanian-born considered the USSR a friend of the Arabs than the US-born themselves, of whom 25 per cent considered it a friend and 25 per cent did not. Among the US-born respondents, the largest rate, had no idea (20 per cent). This does not mean that the US is less hostile to the USSR than Jordan, but shows that some Palestinian Americans believe that the US aspires towards a friendship with the Arabs, which they do not agree with. They believe that it is in the interest of the Arabs to reject this 'harmful' friendship as they described it.

Concerning the place of residence before emigrating to the US, the respondents who resided in the Arabian Gulf countries were the least inclined to consider the USSR a friend of the Arabs (10.5 per cent): 47.4 per cent considered it their enemy due to the great influence of the Islamic religion in that area. Among the respondents, those who came from a rural origin had the least confidence that the USSR is a friend of the Arabs (27.3 per cent) and are the most critical of that friendship (48.5 per cent), but also included fewer who claimed that the USSR is an enemy of the Arabs. They are loyal to their rural origins and can only take mediatory decisions. At the other extreme are those who come from refugee camps; 41.7 per cent of them believe that the USSR is a friend. The people who came from cities before immigration are situated in the middle. It was clear that the illiterate form the largest group who consider the USSR a friend of the Arabs, but the rate was not consistent with the other academic levels. The kind of profession practised by the Palestinian American also had its influence. Among the respondents who considered the Soviets friends of the Arabs are the workers (41.4 per cent) and at the other extreme were the businessmen. The group that generally considered the USSR not to be a friend was the students. This shows the great influence of a person's profession in defining his opinion. It also shows the



difference in attitude between the student's opinion and his opinion when he becomes an academic.

Income is a complement to the profession as we have already shown. The higher the Palestinian American's income is, the less he tends to consider the USSR a friend of the Arabs. Most of those who do not consider the USSR a friend of the Arabs have an annual income of more than 50,000 dollars or less than 10,000 dollars (33.3 per cent of both categories). The attitude of the high income-earners toward the USSR is not surprising, but the stand of the Palestinian Americans on a very low income (less than 10,000 dollars) is strange. We suggest that the reason is that those who are unemployed, mostly illiterate women and old men who receive small amounts of money from welfare, form a large proportion of those who have a low income.

The question of relations with the USSR is a very sensitive issue among the Arabs and the Palestinians, and even more sensitive to the Palestinians in America. It is known that the Islamic religion forms the basis of that relationship, if not on the part of the governments, then by the ordinary people. Religion has a great influence on all the issues we studied, especially concerning the position of the Palestinian Americans on the USSR. The results of our studies showed that half of the Christian respondents accepted that the USSR is a thorough friend of the Arabs, while 30.2 per cent of Muslim respondents had the same opinion. 21.4 per cent of the Christian respondents and 23.6 per cent of the Muslim respondents answered that the USSR is not a friend of the Arabs. 16.7 per cent of the Christian respondents offered no opinion because they are more assimilated in American society than the Muslims, whereas 3.1 per cent of the Muslim respondents gave no opinion which implies that the Muslims are more interested in the matter of relations with the Soviet Union. Those who regularly observe religious duties among the Christians and the Muslims are less confident that the USSR is a friend of the Arabs and consider it more as an enemy.

Palestinian Americans who consider the USSR a real friend of the Arabs are most radical in demanding what they consider the national legitimate rights of the Palestinians. They demand clear borders either for the whole of historical Palestine or in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and only four per cent of them would be content with only a part of historical Palestine. They are against the participation of any Arab or non-Arab state in representing the Palestinian people. They refuse any kind of special relations with Jordan and strongly defend the unity and the representation of the Palestinian people by the PLO. They are against American plans for the area.

None of those who have no opinion support the participation of the USSR in the plans to solve the Palestinian crisis, while 13.6 per cent of those who have no idea, are against its participation. If we consider having no opinion as a sign of illiteracy or of greater assimilation into American society, we can assess the relationship between these two phenomena (illiteracy and assimilation) and the attitude towards the Soviet Union: wherever one or both of these two are present there is more opposition to the USSR's policy.

These are the opinions of Palestinian Americans concerning the USSR and its policy in the area. What about the supporters of the PLO amongst them? Do these people follow the 'slogan' which the Palestinian revolution 'officially' holds which is that the Soviet Union is considered a strategic ally of the Palestinian revolution? There is some contradiction between that slogan and the opinions of the supporters of the PLO which shows the instability of the Palestinian leadership in dealing with the question of defining friends and enemies, and shows that the Palestinian Americans are more 'Americans' in this question and see the USSR from this point of view.

Only 17.9 per cent of those who consider the USSR a permanent friend of the Arabs are supporters of Arafat. This is surprising considering the strong alliance between the US and Israel, and Zionist hostility to the Soviet Union in America as seen by the Palestinian Americans.

Most of the respondents who consider the USSR a permanent friend and judge it according to the situation are supporters of Arafat (around 46 per cent). This is the dominant opinion of most of the Palestinians who are not politicized. It is also strange that 13.7 per cent of those who adopted the same stand are even supporters of Habash and two per cent are supporters of the communists.

Around 54 per cent of the supporters of Habash are supporters of the Soviet Union and said that it is a permanent friend of the Arabs, but a lot of them do not. Such a situation can only obtain with the Palestinians in the US who think that being supporters of the Palestinian Left does not commit them to friendship with the USSR or perhaps some of them feel that they are more leftwing than the USSR itself. This stand and this feeling were dominant among the supporters of Habash when the Popular Front represented radical nationalistic thought. Probably this feeling is still present with some of them now. As expected, wherever political Islam is present, there is more hostility to USSR. A small percentage of the supporters of the Islamic movements answered that the Soviets are friends of the Arabs, but 45 per cent answered that the Soviets are their enemies. The hostility of the religious parties, and particularly the Islamic ones, to the Soviet Union and the communists has a long history.

21.6 per cent of the supporters of Arafat regarded the USSR as a permanent friend of the Arabs. 63.5 per cent said that it is sometimes a friend, 9.5 per cent considered it as an enemy, and the rest gave no opinion. 65.8 per cent of the supporters of Habash believe that the USSR is a permanent friend of the Arabs, 19.2 per cent said sometimes, 13.7 per cent said no, and 1.4 per cent gave no opinion. 5.1 per cent of the supporters of Islamic movements accept that the USSR is a permanent friend of the Arabs, 20.5 per cent accept that it is a temporary friend, 71.8 per cent said it was an enemy, and the rest gave no opinion.

Those of the mediatory beliefs who represent the petite bourgeoisie (the national-religious) represented by Arafat, are distinguished by the fact that, on the one hand, they do not trust American friendship, and on the other hand, they doubt the friendship of the Soviet Union. It was not surprising that the Palestinian revolution, particularly at its start, insisted that it is neither 'eastern nor western', and it hesitated in making alliances with the Soviet Union and in its dealings with US plans for the area.

The results of Palestinian Americans' attitudes towards the participation of the Soviet Union in the efforts to solve the problem of the Middle East are:

- (i) The respondents who largely rejected the participation of the Soviets are more numerous among those who have no opinion concerning the Palestinian organizations. Thirteen per cent of those who supported the participation of the USSR, 17.4 per cent of those supported it with reservations, and 31.6 per cent of those who did not support its participation, have no opinion about Palestinian organizations.
- (ii) The supporters of the Islamic movements are the ones who least support Soviet participation (46.7 per cent); most of the supporters of Arafat support the USSR with reservations.
- (iii) The United States-born Palestinians who are more assimilated are either against the USSR's participation or have no opinion. This is true regardless of which Palestinian organization they belong to. 35.1 per cent of Arafat supporters strongly support the USSR's participation, 41.9 per cent support it with reservations, 10.8 per cent do not, and 12.2 per cent have no idea. 58.9 per cent of the supporters of Habash strongly support it, 32.9 per cent support it with reservations (which shows that a lot of them do not agree on the political solution in principle), 4.1 per cent do not support it and 4.1 per cent have no opinion. Five per cent of the supporters of the Islamic movements strongly support it, 17.5 per cent support it with reservations, 70 per cent do not support it and 7.5 per cent have no opinion. This shows the hostility of the supporters of the Islamic movements to the USSR, which implies that the internal struggle among the Palestinians and between leftists and the Islamic movements, will be sharper in the future.

One Palestinian American in New Jersey described the situation of the Palestinian community there by saying that had it not been for the Palestinian cause, to which they are very sensitive, Palestinians would have been American in all their opinions. This is an exaggeration, but true to a great extent.

It should be pointed out that when speaking about the leftists' point of view in this discussion, we referred to the supporters of Habash, the head of the Popular Front

for the Liberation of Palestine, which is different from the other leftists parties, such as the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, headed by Nayef Hawatmeh, and the Palestinian Communist Party. Therefore, the opinion of the supporters of the Popular Front among the Palestinian Americans does not demonstrate the position of all the Palestinian leftist factions, particularly on the question of peaceful solutions, acceptable borders of a Palestinian state, and political alliances with the USA and the USSR.

#### Notes

1. Findley, Paul (1984) *They dare to speak out : people & Institutions confront Israel's lobby*, Westport, Conn: Lawrence Hill.
2. Ibrahim, 1986, 27
3. Reisman, 1970, 161
4. Al-Hur, 1983, 165
5. Said, 1986, 31
6. Edward Said in Al-Quds, 5.9.1986
7. Abd al-Hadi, 1975, 217
8. Al-Hur, 1983, 201

#### 4. CONCLUSION

When an ordinary Palestinian travels between Ramallah and Jerusalem or to Al-Bireh and Deir Debwan in the Ramallah district, he is attracted by the many beautiful villas that cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. He immediately thinks of those Palestinians who have gone at different periods to America and who 'enjoy' the life, and live in 'complete happiness'.

A lot of Palestinians are ambitious to follow others to America, to escape from their reality and to live in comfort, and eventually to return after months or years and build beautiful villas. Many people, particularly young people, go early in the morning to queue in front of the American consulate in East Jerusalem in order to get a visa that allows them to go where 'happiness is'. Only a few succeed, others seek mediators to facilitate it for them, or go back home to bury their dream.

This study has discussed the condition of the Palestinian Americans, how they live in that 'dream' society and how they feel about the Palestinian national cause. Do they believe, for example, that the cause is only a 'villa' located in the country and no more, or is it a permanent ambition and continuous struggle in order to build an independent Palestinian entity and Palestinian character. It seems clear that, in spite of the importance of the Palestinian community in the US, political activity among Palestinian Americans mostly does not exist except for the students and some intellectuals.

Although these students and intellectuals form a sizeable proportion of the Palestinians in America in comparison to the other communities, a lot of them are not American citizens and others are fairly isolated from the rest of the community. Most of their political activity is propaganda for the *Palestinian American* cause and not organized political activity in order to recruit the Palestinian community in America for the *Palestinian* goal.

The industrial workers, who are relative newcomers in the United States, are more radical than the other members of the community in their political views, contrary to the businessmen. Their general tendency is to the left of the official leadership of the PLO. The lumpenproletariat have a more Islamic orientation: an Islam which is related to Arab nationality, and which is considered more 'revolutionary' than Islam in the Arab countries. Because Islam is not the religion of the majority of Americans, its believers seem to be challenging the dominant thought there.

The early arrivals in the US are now the owners of stores who first worked in peddling and accumulated enough money to establish themselves as businessmen, albeit on a simple level. These people represent the dominant Palestinian thought including all the different perspectives, but at the same time they insist on keeping good relations with the United States.

Although the Palestinians in the United States have different professions, many of them, as part of American society, face unemployment. In 1976, the rate of unemployment among Palestinians in the US was 67 per cent.<sup>1</sup> Even when the young and those unable to work are excluded, the rate of unemployment remains very high. The rest of the unemployed are divided into two groups: those who are involved in the underworld in the US and have nothing to do with politics, and those who are to be found in the coffee houses and clubs of the community and are 'experts' in criticizing the plans of the Palestinian organizations and their leadership.

It is not easy to define the political attitudes of Palestinian Americans although an organised Palestinian movement in the US is still in its infancy. It is very much affected by the unsettled situation of the Palestinian revolution.

The political tendency of the Palestinian American is subjected to many influences of which the most important is the place of birth or the previous place of residence. The influence of the Arab countries and their regimes on the Palestinians is still felt even after their migration to US and settling there as a permanent place of residence. This influence is more effective than the other different social influences. Also, religion, income, the type of work and the level of education influence political beliefs profoundly.



The Palestinian Americans who were born or resided in the Arab countries, particularly Jordan and the Arabian Gulf, were the most 'moderate' and conservative. In contrast, those who were born or resided in Lebanon are mostly more enthusiastic to regain all the historical rights of the Palestinians, which cannot be achieved except by armed revolutionary violence.

Those born in pre-1948 Palestine, Israel and the Occupied Territories stood to the right of the Lebanese-born and to the left of the Jordanian and the Arabian Gulf-born.

Assimilation into American society, particularly for those who were born in the United States, played an important role in defining the political beliefs of Palestinian Americans. This assimilation was not characterized by taking more right-wing positions, but was an element in distancing the Palestinian American from the national Palestinian cause and leaving him without opinions concerning the details of the cause.

Palestinian immigration to the United States is more dangerous to the Palestinian national cause than immigration to the Arab countries. In the Arab countries, they are rejected by their surroundings which makes them more committed to their Palestinian identity, but at the same time it is easier for them to assimilate into American society, which distances them from their national identity.

The Palestinians in the US may have become more Americanized because of the great Zionist activity in the US and its role in supporting Israel against the Palestinians: at the same time, American propaganda portraying the Palestinians only as terrorists, which forces the Palestinians into greater solidarity with each other, always remembering their Palestinian identity also encourages them to conceal their background or distance themselves from it.

The present Palestinian organizations in the US, particularly those which have American characteristics, are not popular ones but are formed by educated people who work for the Palestinian cause and challenge the discrimination against Palestinian and Arab-Americans.

Contrary to the Jewish community which has influence and importance, the Palestinian community in the US is not influential and consolidated as a community, except for a group of educated individuals (academics and politicians).

In the US, there are no Palestinian Americans who support the Palestinian organizations sponsored by the Arab regimes. They only support 'independent' national organizations which have no Arab influence. They do not have parties or organizations of their own as Palestinian Americans except for some societies. They are either political extensions of the Palestinians in general or part of American politics such as Republicans or Democrats. Also there are others who are part of both Palestinian and American politics, in spite of the big contradiction between the aims of American policy and Palestinian policy.

It seems that the formal unity of the Right wing is of a higher degree than the formal unity of the Left wing among the Palestinian Americans in the US.

The Palestinian Right wing in the US concentrates on solidarity and sometimes practices it. The leftist Palestinian American is a 'Palestinian' who has some connections with American leftist organizations, he is a nationalist Palestinian, while the right-wing Palestinian is a nationalist Palestinian and at the same time, part of American capitalism.

In spite of their great disagreements, which are an extension of the nationalist Palestinians' disagreements in their homeland, the Palestinian Americans, like Palestinians elsewhere, agree on the main lines of their cause and disagree on everything else. Their disagreements are exacerbated by differences particular to their being in the US: for instance, between the inhabitants of New Jersey and New York who came originally from Deir Dibwan or Al-Birch in the Ramallah district. They are agreed that they have a problem and that they have a just cause that all people should support. The stand of any person, nation or state towards the Palestinian cause is the measure by which to classify them as 'good or bad'.

Palestinian Americans have three main attitudes: moderates, who are the supporters of the official leadership of the PLO under Arafat, or the Palestinian right

wing as it is called by the leftists; supporters of the leftist organizations, particularly the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine under Habash; and the Islamic block.

The supporters of the leftists and the fundamentalist Islamic block are increasing, particularly among the new emigrants. We think that if no new elements change the direction of the struggle in the area, the leftists and the fundamentalist Muslims will continue to increase in number but not the Palestinian moderates. The religious Muslims will be the most obvious candidates to replace the PLO. Those who search for an alternative to the PLO would not find it among the so-called 'village leagues' or in Jordan, for example, because they are counter to the feelings of the Palestinians who aspire to have their national identity, but many believe that Islam will rescue them from trouble.

The results of the poll published in the Jerusalem newspaper *Al-Fajr*<sup>2</sup> concerning the political orientation of the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, do not differ much from that of the Palestinian Americans, as given by this study. The rate of support for the PLO in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is 93.5 per cent, and in the US 87.3 per cent. Those who do not support it register the same percentage in the two areas (5.1 per cent).

The big difference is among those who have no opinion (1.4 per cent in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and 7.7 per cent in the US). 85.5 per cent of the respondents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and 88.5 per cent of the Palestinian American respondents said that the role of the US in the area is negative.

Palestinian Americans are more 'Palestinian' concerning matters related to Palestine and more 'American' concerning other matters. Their stand on the Palestinian cause does not necessarily reflect their attitude to the Soviet Union. They might be against Zionism and Communism at the same time. What is applicable to them is the opposite of the rule that says 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend': where the Soviet Union is concerned the rule becomes 'the enemy of my enemy is my enemy'.

The first generation of Palestinians in the United States were simple people who view the Palestinian cause through the logic of the 1940s. Those who achieved upward mobility are those who have become more Americanized, - they do not understand a lot about the Palestinian cause and mostly have no opinion concerning it. The new emigrants are representatives of the Palestinian people in general, in all their political tendencies, struggles, disappointments with the Arab regimes, and their continuous aspiration to win back their rights.

#### Notes

1. Mansur, 1980, 90
2. *Al-Fajr*, 12 September 1986

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 أَذِنَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَرْفَعَ وَيُذَكِّرَ فِيهَا أَسْمَاءُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ ⑤  
 رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ  
 الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَلَا يَبْصُرُ

يعلن المركز الاسلامي في مدينة جيرسي سيتي

## عن الاعتكاف الشهري

يوم السبت الاول من كل شهر

معلومات اعتكاف الشهر الحالي

المكان: المركز الاسلامي لمدينة جيرسي .

17 PARK ST. JERSEY CITY NJ.

التاريخ: ٧ كانون الاول (DEC. 7th) ١٩٨٥ .

الوقت: الساعة السابعة بعد صلاة العشاء .

من بعض فقرات الاعتكاف:

- ١ - قراءة القرآن الكريم .
- ٢ - تفسير لسورة من سور القرآن او محاضرة دينية او كلاهما .
- ٣ - وجبة عشاء .....
- ٤ - قيام الليل .
- ٥ - إفطار جماعي صباح يوم الاحد .

وفقنا الله وإياكم الى ما يحبه ويرضاه

لجنة الاعتكاف

المركز الاسلامي لجيرسي سيتي

## Appendix A:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

(This lamp is found) in houses which Allah hath allowed to be exalted and wherein His name shall be remembered. Therein do offer praise to Him at morn and evening.

Men whom neither merchandise nor sale beguileth from remembrance of Allah, constancy in prayer and payment of alms; who fear a day when hearts and eyes will be overwhelmed.

The Islamic Centre in Jersey City announces:

Assembly for monthly worship on the first Saturday of every month.

Information on present month's meeting:

Place: The Islamic Centre in Jersey City, 17 Park St.  
Jersey City N.J.

Date: (Dec. 7th) 1985

Time: Seven o'clock after evening prayer.

Some parts of the meeting:

1. Reading from the Holy Quran.
2. Interpretation of one of the verses of the Quran or religious lecture or both.
3. The evening meal.
4. The night prayer.
5. A collective breakfast on Sunday morning.

May God lead us and you to what pleases and satisfies Him

Assembly Committee  
The Islamic Centre of Jersey City.



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